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MATTHEW ARNOLD.

MATTHEW ARNOLD'S

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

AND OTHER POEMS

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

JUSTUS COLLINS CASTLEMAN

HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH IN THE BLOOMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

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PREFACE

MATTHEW ARNOLD'S poetry is preëminently the work of a scholar and a gentleman, and, as such, has a place in the high school and in the lives of young people. The ethical teachings of his verse, with their unvarying insistence upon the supremacy of conduct and duty, are especially helpful, while the classic nature of his style and manner afford a singular charm and interest. The aim of this little volume, then, is to familiarize, in a measure, the high school student with one of the ablest poetic spirits of the last century and to add one more name to his list of poet acquaintances.

The present edition attempts little in the way of criticism, the introduction and notes being intended merely to supply the needs of those students who do not have access to a well-stocked library. Suggestive questions have also been added, which are designed to aid in the appreciation and interpretation of the included poems.

The editor wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to

several excellent older editions of *Sohrab and Rustum*, and also to his brother, J. H. Castleman, Master of English at the Michigan Military Academy, for valuable suggestions. Other sources from which information has been drawn in preparing this edition are mentioned under "Bibliography."

J. C. C.

Bloomington, Indiana,
January, 1905.

CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE v

INTRODUCTION

A Short Life of Arnold ix
Arnold the Poet xvi
Arnold the Critic xxix
Chronological List of Arnold's Works . . . xxxiv
Contemporary Authors xxxix
Bibliography xl

SELECTIONS FROM ARNOLD

NARRATIVE POEMS

Sohrab and Rustum 1
Saint Brandan 28
The Forsaken Merman 31
Tristram and Iseult 36

LYRICAL POEMS

The Church of Brou 63
Requiescat 70
Consolation 71
A Dream 74
Lines written in Kensington Gardens . . . 75
The Strayed Reveller 77

PAGE

Morality 87
Dover Beach 88
Philomela 90
Human Life 91
Isolation 92
Kaiser Dead 93
The Last Word 96
Palladium 97
Revolutions 98
Self-Dependence 99
A Summer Night 100
Geist's Grave 103
Epilogue to Lessing's Laocoön 106

SONNETS

Quiet Work 115
Shakespeare 115
Youth's Agitations 116
Austerity of Poetry 117
Worldly Place 117
East London 118
West London 119

ELEGIAC POEMS

Memorial Verses 121
The Scholar-Gipsy 123
Thyrsis 132
Rugby Chapel 140

NOTES 149

INDEX TO NOTES 213

INTRODUCTION

A SHORT LIFE OF ARNOLD

Matthew Arnold, poet and critic, was born in the village of Laleham, Middlesex County, England, December 24, 1822. He was the son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, best remembered as the great Head Master at Rugby and in later years distinguished also as a historian of Rome, and of Mary Penrose Arnold, a woman of remarkable character and intellect.

Devoid of stirring incident, and comparatively free from the eccentricities so common to men of genius, the story of Arnold's life is soon told. As a boy he lived the life of the normal English lad, with its healthy routine of task and play. He was at school at both Laleham and Winchester, then at Rugby, where he attracted attention as a student and won a prize for poetry. In 1840 he was elected to an open scholarship at Balliol College, Oxford, and the next year matriculated for his university work.

Arnold's career at Oxford was a memorable one. While there he was associated with such men as John Duke Coleridge, John Shairp, Dean Fraser, Dean Church, John Henry Newman, Thomas Hughes, the Froudes, and,

closest of all, with Arthur Hugh Clough, whose early death he lamented in his exquisite elegiac poem — *Thyrsis*. Among this brilliant company Arnold moved with ease, the recognized favorite. Having taken the Newdigate prize for English verse, and also having won a scholarship, he was graduated with honors in 1844, and in March of the following year had the additional distinction of being elected a Fellow of Oriel, the crowning glory of an Oxford graduate. He afterward taught classics for a short time at Rugby, then in 1847 accepted the post of private secretary to the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord President of the Council, which position he occupied until 1851, when he was appointed Lay Inspector of Schools by the Committee on Education. The same year he married Frances Lucy Wightman, daughter of Sir William Wightman, judge of the Court of the Queen's Bench.

Arnold's record as an educator is unparalleled in the history of England's public schools. For more than thirty-five years he served as inspector and commissioner, which offices he filled with efficiency. As inspector he was earnest, conscientious, versatile; beloved alike by teachers and pupils. The Dean of Salisbury likened his appearance, to inspect the school at Kiddermaster, to the admission of a ray of light when a shutter is suddenly opened in a darkened room. All-in-all, he valued happy-appearing children, and kindly sympathetic teachers, more than excellence in grade reports. In connection with the duties of his office as commissioner, he travelled fre-

quently on the Continent to inquire into foreign methods of primary and secondary education. Here he found much that was worth while, and often carried back to London larger suggestions and ideas than the national mind was ready to accept. Under his supervision, however, the school system of England was extensively revised and improved. He resigned his position under the Committee of Council on Education, in 1886, two years before his death.

In the meantime Arnold's pen had not been idle. His first volume of verse, *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems*, appeared (1848), and although quietly received, slowly won its way into public favor. The next year the narrative poem, *The Sick King in Bokhara*, came out, and was followed in turn by a third volume in 1853, under the title of *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems*. By this time Arnold's reputation as a poet was established, and in 1857 he was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford, where he began his career as a lecturer, in which capacity he twice visited America. *Merope, a Tragedy* (1856) and a volume under the title of *New Poems* (1869) finish the list of his poetical works, with the exception of occasional verses.

Arnold's prose works, aside from his letters, consist wholly of critical essays, in which he has dealt fearlessly with the greater issues of his day. As will be seen by their titles (see page xxxviii of this volume), the subject-matter of these essays is of very great scope, embracing in theme literature, politics, social conduct, and popular

religion. By them Arnold has exerted a remarkable influence on public thought and stamped himself as one of the ablest critics and reformers of the last century. Arnold's life was thus one of many widely diverse activities and was at all times deeply concerned with practical as well as with literary affairs; and on no side was it deficient in human sympathies and relations. He won respect and reputation while he lived, and his works continue to attract men's minds, although with much unevenness. It has been said of him that, of all the modern poets, except Goethe, he was the best critic, and of all the modern critics, with the same exception, he was the best poet. He died at Liverpool, where he had gone to meet his daughter returning from America, April 15, 1888. By his death the world lost an acute and cultured critic, a refined writer, an earnest educational reformer, and a noble man. He was buried in his native town, Laleham.

Agreeably to his own request, Arnold has never been made the subject for a biography. By means of his letters, his official reports, and statements of his friends, however, one is able to trace the successive stages of his career, as he steadily grew in honor and public usefulness. Though somewhat inadequate, the picture thus presented is singularly pleasing and attractive. The subjoined appreciations have been selected with a view of giving the student a glimpse of Arnold as he appeared to unprejudiced minds.

One who knew him at Oxford wrote of him as follows: "His perfect self-possession, the sallies of his ready wit,

the humorous turn which he could give to any subject that he handled, his gaiety, audacity, and unfailing command of words, made him one of the most popular and successful undergraduates that Oxford has ever known."

"He was beautiful as a young man, strong and manly, yet full of dreams and schemes. His Olympian manners began even at Oxford: there was no harm in them: they were natural, not put on. The very sound of his voice and wave of his arm were Jove-like." — PROFESSOR MAX MÜLLER.

"He was most distinctly on the side of human enjoyment. He conspired and contrived to make things pleasant. Pedantry he abhorred. He was a man of this life and this world. A severe critic of this world he indeed was; but, finding himself in it, and not precisely knowing what is beyond it, like a brave and true-hearted man, he set himself to make the best of it. Its sights and sounds were dear to him. The 'uncrumpling fern, the eternal moonlit snow,' the red grouse springing at our sound, the tinkling bells of the 'high-pasturing kine,' the vagaries of men, of women, and dogs, their odd ways and tricks, whether of mind or manner, all delighted, amused, tickled him.

* * * * * * * *

"In a sense of the word which is noble and blessed, he was of the earth earthy. . . . His mind was based on the plainest possible things. What he hated most was the fantastic — the far-fetched, all-elaborated fancies and strained interpretations. He stuck to the beaten track

of human experience, and the broader the better. He was a plain-sailing man. This is his true note." — Mr. Augustine Birrell.

"He was incapable of sacrificing the smallest interest of anybody to his own; he had not a spark of envy or jealousy; he stood well aloof from all the hustlings and jostlings by which selfish men push on; he bore life's disappointments — and he was disappointed in some reasonable hopes — with good nature and fortitude; he cast no burden upon others, and never shrank from bearing his own share of the daily load to the last ounce of it; he took the deepest, sincerest, and most active interest in the well-being of his country and his countrymen." — Mr. John Morley.

In his essay on Arnold, George E. Woodberry speaks of the poet's personality as revealed by his letters in the following beautiful manner: "Few who did not know Arnold could have been prepared for the revelation of a nature so true, so amiable, so dutiful. In every relation of private life he is shown to have been a man of exceptional constancy and plainness. . . . Every one must take delight in the mental association with Arnold in the scenes of his existence . . . and in his family affections. A nature warm to its own, kindly to all, cheerful, fond of sport and fun, and always fed from pure fountains, and with it a character so founded upon the rock, so humbly serviceable, so continuing in power and grace, must wake in all the responses of happy appreciation and leave the charm of memory.

"He did his duty as naturally as if it required neither resolve nor effort, nor thought of any kind for the morrow, and he never failed, seemingly, in act or word of sympathy, in little or great things; and when to this one adds the clear ether of the intellectual life where he habitually moved in his own life apart, and the humanity of his home, the gift that these letters bring may be appreciated. That gift is the man himself, but set in the atmosphere of home, with sonship and fatherhood, sisters and brothers, with the bereavements of years fully accomplished, and those of babyhood and boyhood — a sweet and wholesome English home, with all the cloud and sunshine of the English world drifting over its roof-trees, and the soil of England beneath its stones, and English duties for the breath of its being. To add such a home to the household rights of English Literature is perhaps something from which Arnold would have shrunk, but it endears his memory."

"It may be overmuch
He shunned the common stain and smutch,
From soilure of ignoble touch
Too grandly free,
Too loftily secure in such
Cold purity;
But he preserved from chance control
The fortress of his established soul,
In all things sought to see the whole;
Brooked no disguise,
And set his heart upon the goal,
Not on the prize."

— Mr. William Watson, *In Laleham Churchyard.*

ARNOLD THE POET

Matthew Arnold was essentially a man of the intellect. No other author of modern times, perhaps no other English author of any time, appeals so directly as he to the educated classes. Even a cursory reading of his pages, prose or verse, reveals the scholar and the critic. He is always thinking, always brilliant, never lacks for a word or phrase; and on the whole, his judgments are good. Between his prose and verse, however, there is a marked difference, both in tone and spiritual quality. True, each possesses the note of a lofty, though stoical courage; reveals the same grace of finish and exactness of phrase and manner; and is, in equal degree, the output of a singularly sane and noble nature; but here the comparison ends; for, while his prose is often stormy and contentious, his poetry has always about it an atmosphere of entire repose. The cause of this difference is not far to seek. His poetry, written in early manhood, reflects his inner self, the more lovable side of his nature; while his prose presents the critic and the reformer, pointing out the good and bad, and permitting at times a spirit of bitterness to creep in, as he endeavors to arouse men out of their easy contentment with themselves and their surroundings.

With the exception of occasional verses, Arnold's poetical career began and ended inside of twenty years. The reason for this can only be conjectured, and need

not be dwelt upon here. But although his poetic life was brief, it was of a very high order, his poems ranking well up among the literary productions of the last century. As a popular poet, however, he will probably never class with Tennyson or Longfellow. His poems are too coldly classical and too unattractive in subject to appeal to the casual reader, who is, generally speaking, inclined toward poetry of the emotions rather than of the intellect — Arnold's usual kind. That he recognized this himself, witness the following quiet statements made in letters to his friends: "My poems are making their way, I think, though slowly, and are perhaps never to make way very far. There must always be some people, however, to whom the literalness and sincerity of them has a charm. . . . They represent, on the whole, the main movement of mind of the last quarter of a century, and thus they will probably have their day, as people become conscious to themselves of what that movement of mind is, and interested in the literary productions which reflect it." Time has verified the accuracy of this judgment. In short, Arnold has made a profound rather than a wide impression. To a few, however, of each generation, he will continue to be a "voice oracular," — a poet with a purpose and a message.

Arnold's Poetic Culture. — Obviously, the sources of Arnold's culture were classical. As one critic has tersely said, "He turned over his Greek models by day and by night." Here he found his ideal standards, and here he brought for comparison all questions that engrossed his

thoughts. Homer (he replied to an inquirer) and Epictetus (of mood congenial with his own) were props of his mind, as were Sophocles, "who saw life steadily and saw it whole," and Marcus Aurelius, whom he called the purest of men. These like natures afforded him repose and consolation. Greek epic and dramatic poetry and Greek philosophy appealed profoundly to him. Of the Greek poets he wrote: "No other poets have lived so much by the imaginative reason; no other poets have made their works so well balanced; no other poets have so well satisfied the thinking power; have so well satisfied the religious sense." More than any other English poet he prized the qualities of measure, proportion, and restraint; and to him lucidity, austerity, and high seriousness, conspicuous elements of classic verse, were the substance of true poetry. In explaining his own position as to his art, he says: "In the sincere endeavor to learn and practise, amid the bewildering confusion of our times, what is sound and true in poetic art, I seem to myself to find the only sure guidance, the only solid footing, among the ancients. They, at any rate, knew what they wanted in Art, and we do not. It is this uncertainty which is disheartening, and not hostile criticism." And again: "The radical difference between the poetic theory of the Greeks and our own is this: that with them, the poetical character of the action in itself, and the conduct of it, was the first consideration; with us, attention is fixed mainly on the value of separate thoughts and images which occur in the treatment of an action. They regard

the whole; we regard the parts. We have poems which seem to exist merely for the sake of single lines and passages, and not for the sake of producing any total impression. We have critics who seem to direct their attention merely to detached expressions, to the language about the action, not the action itself. I verily believe that the majority of them do not believe that there is such a thing as a total impression to be derived from a poem at all, or to be demanded from a poet. They will permit the poet to select any action he pleases, and to suffer that action to go as it will, provided he gratifies them with occasional bursts of fine writing, and with a show of isolated thoughts and images; that is, they permit him to leave their poetic sense ungratified, provided that he gratifies their rhetorical sense and their curiosity."

Arnold has illustrated, with remarkable success, his ideas of that unity which gratifies the poetical sense, and has approached very close to his Greek models in numerous instances; most notably so in his great epic or narrative poem, *Sohrab and Rustum*, which is dealt with elsewhere in this introduction. Perhaps we could not do better than to quote for our consideration at this time, a fine synthesis of Mr. Arthur Galton. He says: "In Matthew Arnold's style and in his manner, he seems to me to recall the great masters, and this in a striking and in an abiding way. . . . To recall them at all is a rare gift, but to recall them naturally, and with no strained sense nor jarring note of imitation, is a gift so exceed-

ingly rare that it is almost enough in itself to place a writer among the great masters; to proclaim that he is one of them. To recall them at all is a rare gift, though not a unique gift; a few other modern poets recall them too; but with these, with every one of them, it is the exception when they resemble the great masters. They have their own styles, which abide with them; it is only now and then, by a flash of genius, that they break through their own styles, and attain the one immortal style. Just the contrary of this is true of Matthew Arnold. It is his own, his usual, and his most natural style which recalls the great masters; and only when he does not write like himself, does he cease to resemble them. . . . No man who attains to this great style can fail to have a distinguished function; and Matthew Arnold, like Milton, will be 'a leaven and a power,' because he, too, has made the great style current in English. With his desire for culture and for perfection, there is no destiny he would prefer to this, for which his nature, his training, and his sympathies, all prepared him. To convey the message of those ancients whom he loved so well, in that English tongue which he was taught by them to use so perfectly; — to serve as an eternal protest against charlatanism and vulgarity; — is exactly the mission he would have chosen for himself. . . . The few writers of our language, therefore, who give us 'an ideal of excellence, the most high and the most rare,' have an important function; we should study their works continually, and it should be a matter of passionate concern with

us, that the 'ideals,' that is, the definite and perfect models, should abide with us forever." The Greeks recognized three kinds of poetry, — Lyric, Dramatic, and Epic. Arnold tried all three. First, then, as a lyricist.

Arnold as a Lyricist. — Lyric poetry is the artistic expression of the poet's individual sentiments and emotions, hence it is subjective. The action is usually rapid, the verse musical, the time quick. Unlike the Epic and Drama, it has no preferred verse or meter, but leaves the poet free to choose or invent appropriate forms. In this species of verse Arnold was not wholly at ease. As has been said, one searches in vain through the whole course of his poetry for a blithe, musical, gay or serious, off-hand poem, the true lyric kind. The reason for this is soon discovered. Obviously, it lies in the fundamental qualities of the poet's mind and temperament. Though by no means lacking in emotional sensibility, Arnold was too intellectually self-conscious to be carried away by the impulsiveness common to the lyrical moods. With him the intellect was always master; the emotions, subordinate. With the lyricist, the order is, in the main, at least, reversed. The poet throws off intellectual restraint, and "lets his illumined being o'errun" with music and song. This Arnold could not or would not do. Then, too, Arnold's lyrics are often at fault metrically. This, combined with frequent questionable rhymes, argues a not too discriminating poetical ear. He also lacked genius in inventing verse forms, and hence found himself under the necessity of employing or adapting those

already in use. In this respect he was notably inferior to Tennyson, many of whose measures are wholly his own. Again, considerable portions of his lyric verse consist merely of prose, cut into lines of different length, in imitation of the unrhymed measures of the Greek poet, Pindar. The Bishop of Derry, commenting on these rhythmic novelties, likens them to the sound of a stick drawn by a city gamin sharply across the area railings, — a not inapt comparison. That they were not always successful, witness the following stanza from *Merope*: —

> "Thou confessest the prize
> In the rushing, blundering, mad,
> Cloud-enveloped, obscure,
> Unapplauded, unsung
> Race of Calamity, mine?"

Surely this is but the baldest prose. At intervals, however, Arnold was nobly lyrical, and strangely, too, at times, in those same uneven measures in which are found his most signal failures — the unrhymed Pindaric. *Philomela* written in this style is one of the most exquisite bits of verse in the language. As one critic has put it, "It ought to be written in silver and bound in gold." In urbanity of phrase and in depth of genuine pathos it is unsurpassed and shows Arnold at his best. *Rugby Chapel*, *The Youth of Nature*, *The Youth of Man*, and *A Dream* are good examples of his longer efforts in this verse form. In the more common lyric measures, Arnold was, at times, equally successful. Saintsbury, commenting on *Requiescat*, says that the poet has "here achieved

the triple union of simplicity, pathos, and (in the best sense) elegance"; and adds that there is not a false note in the poem. He also speaks enthusiastically of the "honey-dropping trochees" of the *New Sirens*, and of the "chiselled and classic perfection" of the lines of *Resignation*. Herbert W. Paul, writing of *Mycerinus*, declares that no such verse has been written in England since Wordsworth's *Laodamia;* and continues, "The poem abounds in single lines of haunting charm." Among his more successful longer lyrics are *The Sick King in Bokhara*, *Switzerland*, *Faded Leaves*, and *Tristram and Iseult*, and *Epilogue to Lessing's Laocoön*, included in this volume.

Arnold as a Dramatist. — The drama is imitated human action, and is intended to exhibit a picture of human life by means of dialogue, acting, and stage accessories. In nature, it partakes of both lyric and epic, thus uniting sentiment and action with narration. Characters live and act before us, and speak in our presence, the interest being kept up by constantly shifting situations tending toward some striking result. As a dramatist, Arnold achieved no great success. Again the fundamental qualities of his mind stood in the way. An author so subjective, so absorbed in self-scrutiny and introspection as he, is seldom able to project himself into the minds of others to any considerable extent. His dramas are brilliant with beautiful phrases, his pictures of landscapes and of nature in her various aspects approach perfection; but in the main, he fails to handle his plots in a dramatic

manner and, as a result, does not secure the totality of impression so vital to the drama. Frequently, too, his characters are tedious, and in their dialogue manage to be provokingly unnatural or insipid. They also lack in individuality and independence in speech and action. Many of his situations, likewise, are at fault. For instance, one can scarcely conceive of such characters as Ulysses and Circe playing the subordinate roles assigned to them in *The Strayed Reveller*. A true dramatist would hardly have committed so flagrant a blunder. *Merope* is written in imitation of the Greek tragedians. It has dignity of subject, nobility of sentiment, and a classic brevity of style; but it is frigid and artificial, and fails in the most essential function of drama — to stir the reader's emotions. *Empedocles on Etna*, a half-autobiographical drama, is in some respects a striking poem. It is replete with brilliant passages, and contains some of Arnold's best lyric verses and most beautiful nature pictures; but the dialogue is colorless, the rhymes poor, the plot, such as it contains, but indifferently handled, and even Empedocles, the principal character, is frequently tedious and unnatural. Arnold's dramas show that his forte was not in character-drawing nor in dialogue.

Arnold as a Writer of Epic and Elegy. — Epic poetry narrates in grand style the achievements of heroes — the poet telling the story as if present. It is simple in construction and uniform in meter, yet it admits of the dialogue and the episode, and though not enforcing a moral,

it may hold one in solution. Elegiac poetry is plaintive in tone and expresses sorrow or lamentation. Both epic and elegy are inevitably serious in mood, and slow and stately in action. In these two forms of verse Arnold was at his best. Stockton pronounced *Sohrab and Rustum* the noblest poem in the English language. Another critic has said that "it is the nearest analogue in English to the rapidity of action, plainness of thought, plainness of diction, and nobleness of Homer." Combining, as it does, classic purity of style with romantic ardor of feeling, it stands a direct exemplification of Arnold's poetic theories, as set forth in the preface of his volume of 1853. Especially is it successful in emphasizing his idea of unity of impression; while the truth of its oriental color, the deep pathos of the situation, the fire and intensity of the action, the strong conception of character, and the full, solemn music of the verse, make it unquestionably the masterpiece of Arnold's longer poems, among which it is the largest in bulk and also the most ambitious in scheme. *Balder Dead*, a characteristic Arnoldian production, founded upon the Norse legend of Balder, Lok, and Hader, though not so great as *Sohrab and Rustum*, has much poetic worth and ranks high among its kind; and *Tristram and Iseult*, with its infinite tragedy, and *The Sick King in Bokhara*, gorgeous in oriental color, are rare examples of the lyrical epic. *The Forsaken Merman* and *Saint Brandan*, which are dealt with elsewhere in this volume, are good examples of his shorter narrative poems. In *Thyrsis*, the beautiful

threnody in which he celebrated his dead friend, Clough, Arnold gave to the world one of its greatest elegies. One finds in this poem and its companion piece, *The Scholar-Gipsy*, the same unity of classic form with romantic feeling present in *Sohrab and Rustum*. Both are crystal-clear without coldness, and restrained without loss of a full volume of power. Mr. Saintsbury, writing of *The Scholar-Gipsy*, says: "It has everything — a sufficient scheme, a definite meaning and purpose, a sustained and adequate command of poetical presentation, and passages and phrases of the most exquisite beauty;" and no less praise is due *Thyrsis*. Other of his elegiac poems are *Heine's Grave*, *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*, *Stanzas in Memory of the Author of "Obermann,"* *Obermann Once More*, *Rugby Chapel*, and *Memorial Verses*, the two last named being included in this volume. In such measures as are used in these poems, in the long, stately, swelling measures, whose graver movements accord with a serious and elevated purpose, Arnold was most at ease.

Greek Spirit in Arnold. — But it is not alone in the fact that he selects classic subjects, and writes after the manner of the great masters, that Arnold's affinity with the Greeks is manifested. His poems in spirit, as in form, reflect the moods common to the ancient Hellenes. "One feels the (Greek) quality," writes George E. Woodberry, "not as a source, but as a presence. In Tennyson, Keats, and Shelley there was Greek influence, but in them the result was modern. In Arnold the antiquity remains — remains in mood, just as in Landor it remains in form.

The Greek twilight broods over all his poetry. It is pagan in philosophic spirit, not Attic, but of later and stoical time; with the patience, endurance, suffering, not in the Christian types, but as they now seem to a post-Christian imagination, looking back to the past." Even when his poems treat of modern or romantic subjects, one is impressed with the feeling that he presents them with the same quality of imagination as would the Greek masters themselves: and in the same form.

Arnold's Attitude toward Nature. — In his attitude toward Nature Arnold is often compared to Wordsworth. A close study, however, reveals a wide difference, both in the way Nature appealed to them and in their mood in her presence. To Arnold she offered a temporary refuge from the doubts and distractions of our modern life, — a soothing, consoling, uplifting power; to Wordsworth she was an inspiration, — a presence that disturbed him "with the joy of elevated thoughts." Conscious of the help he found in her association, Arnold urged all men to follow Nature's example; to possess their souls in quietude, despite the storm and turmoil without. Pancoast says: "He delights in leading us to contemplate the infinite calm of Nature, beside which man's transitory woes are reduced to a mere fretful insignificance. All the beautiful poem of *Tristram and Iseult* is built upon the skilful alternation of two themes. We pass from the feverish, wasting, and ephemeral struggle of human passions and desire, into an atmosphere that shames its heat and fume by an immemorial coolness and repose;" and the same

comparison constitutes the theme for a considerable portion of his poetical work. In his method of approaching Nature, Arnold also differed widely from Wordsworth, in that he saw with the outward eye, that is objectively; while Wordsworth saw rather with the inward eye, or subjectively. In this Arnold is essentially Greek and more Tennysonian than Wordsworthian. Many of his poems, in full or in part, are mere nature pictures, and are artistic in the extreme. The pictures of the Oxus stream at the close of *Sohrab and Rustum;* the English garden in *Thyrsis;* and the hunter on the arras, in *Tristram and Iseult,* are all notable examples. This pictorial method Wordsworth seldom used. In spirit, too, the poets differed widely. To Wordsworth, Nature was, first of all, the abiding place of God; but Arnold "finds in the wood and field no streaming forth of beauty and wisdom from the fountainhead of beauty," no habitancy of Nature's God.

Arnold's Attitude toward Life. — Arnold's attitude toward life has been dwelt upon in the appreciations under the biographical sketch in this volume and need only briefly be summed up here. To him, human life in its higher developments presented itself as a stern and strenuous affair; but he never faltered nor sought to escape from his share of the burden. On the contrary, the prevailing note of his poetry is self-reliance; help must come from the soul itself, for

"The fountains of life are all within."

He preaches fortitude and courage in the face of the mysterious and the inevitable — a courage, indeed, forlorn and pathetic in the eyes of many — and he constantly takes refuge from the choking cares of life, in a kind of stoical resignation. As a reformer, his function was especially to stir people up, to make them dissatisfied with themselves and their institutions, and to force them to think, to become individual. Everywhere in his works one is confronted by his unvarying insistence upon the supremacy of conduct and duty. The modern tendency to drift away from the old, established religious faith was a matter of serious thought to him and led him to give to the world a rational creed that would satisfy the sceptics and attract the indifferent. We cannot do better than quote for our closing thought the following pregnant lines from the author's sonnet entitled *The Better Part:* —

> "Hath man no second life? *Pitch this one high!*
> Sits there no judge in Heaven, our sin to see?
> *More strictly, then, the inward judge obey!*
> Was Christ a man like us? *Ah! let us try*
> *If we then, too, can be such men as he!*"

ARNOLD THE CRITIC

The following extracts on Arnold as a critic are quoted from well-known authorities.

"Arnold's prose has little trace of the wistful melancholy of his verse. It is almost always urbane, viva-

cious, light-hearted. The classical bent of his mind shows itself here, unmixed with the inheritance of romantic feeling which colors his poetry. Not only is his prose classical in quality, by virtue of its restraint, of its definite aim, and of the dry white light of intellect which suffuses it; but the doctrine which he spent his life in preaching is based upon a classical ideal, the ideal of symmetry, wholeness, or, as he daringly called it, *perfection*. . . . Wherever, in religion, politics, education, or literature, he saw his countrymen under the domination of narrow ideals, he came speaking the mystic word of deliverance, 'Culture.' Culture, acquaintance with the best which has been thought and done in the world, is his panacea for all ills. . . . In almost all of his prose writing he attacks some form of 'Philistinism,' by which word he characterized the narrow-mindedness and self-satisfaction of the British middle class.

"Arnold's tone is admirably fitted to the peculiar task he had to perform. . . . In *Culture and Anarchy* and many successive works, he made his plea for the gospel of ideas with urbanity and playful grace, as befitted the Hellenic spirit, bringing 'sweetness and light' into the dark places of British prejudice. Sometimes, as in *Literature and Dogma*, where he pleads for a more liberal and literary reading of the Bible, his manner is quiet, suave, and gently persuasive. At other times, as in *Friendship's Garland*, he shoots the arrows of his sarcasm into the ranks of the Philistines with a delicate raillery and scorn, all the more exasperating to his foes

because it is veiled by a mock humility, and is scrupulously polite.

"Of Arnold's literary criticism, the most notable single piece is the famous essay *On Translating Homer*, which deserves careful study for the enlightenment it offers concerning many of the fundamental questions of style. The essays on Wordsworth and on Byron from *Essays in Criticism*, and that on Emerson, from *Discourses in America*, furnish good examples of Arnold's charm of manner and weight of matter in this province.

"The total impression which Arnold makes in his prose may be described as that of a spiritual man-of-the-world. In comparison with Carlyle, Ruskin, and Newman, he is worldly. For the romantic passion and mystic vision of these men he substitutes an ideal of balanced cultivation, the ideal of the trained, sympathetic, cosmopolitan gentleman. He marks a return to the conventions of life after the storm and stress of the romantic age. Yet in his own way he also was a prophet and a preacher, striving whole-heartedly to release his countrymen from bondage to mean things, and pointing their gaze to that symmetry and balance of character which has seemed to many noble minds the true goal of human endeavor." — MOODY AND LOVETT, *A History of English Literature.*

"As a literary critic, his taste, his temper, his judgment were pretty nearly infallible. He combined a loyal and reasonable submission to literary authority, with a free and even daring use of private judgment. His admiration for the acknowledged masters of human utter-

ance — Homer, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe — was genuine and enthusiastic, and incomparably better informed than that of some more conventional critics. Yet this cordial submission to recognized authority, this honest loyalty to established reputation, did not blind him to defects; did not seduce him into indiscriminating praise; did not deter him from exposing the tendency to verbiage in Burke and Jeremy Taylor, the excess blankness of much of Wordsworth's blank verse, the undercurrent of mediocrity in Macaulay, the absurdities of Mr. Ruskin's etymology. And as in great matters, so in small. Whatever literary production was brought under Matthew Arnold's notice, his judgment was clear, sympathetic, and independent. He had the readiest appreciation of true excellence, a quick intolerance of turgidity and inflation — of what he called endeavors to render platitude endurable by making it pompous, and lively horror of affectation and unreality." — Mr. George Russell.

"In his work as literary critic Arnold has occupied a high place among the foremost prose writers of the time. His style is in marked contrast to the dithyrambic eloquence of Carlyle, or to Ruskin's pure and radiant coloring. It is a quiet style, restrained, clear, discriminating, incisive, with little glow of ardor or passion. Notwithstanding its scrupulous assumption of urbanity, it is often a merciless style, indescribably irritating to an opponent by its undercurrent of sarcastic humor, and its calm air of assured superiority. By his insistence

on a high standard of technical excellence, and by his admirable presentation of certain principles of literary judgment, Arnold performed a great work for literature. On the other hand, we miss here, as in his poetry, the human element, the comprehensive sympathy that we recognize in the criticism of Carlyle. Yet Carlyle could not have written the essay *On Translating Homer*, with all its scholarly discrimination in style and technique, any more than Arnold could have produced Carlyle's large-hearted essay on *Burns*. Arnold's varied energy and highly trained intelligence have been felt in many different fields. He has won a peculiar and honorable place in the poetry of the century; he has excelled as literary critic, he has labored in the cause of education, and finally, in his *Culture and Anarchy*, he has set forth his scheme of social reform, and in certain later books has made his contribution to contemporary thought." — PANCOAST, *Introduction to English Literature.*

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF ARNOLD'S WORKS

1840. Alaric at Rome. (Prize poem at Rugby.)
1843. Cromwell. (Prize poem at Oxford.)
1849. The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems.

- Mycerinus.
- The Strayed Reveller.
- Fragment of an Antigone.
- The Sick King in Bokhara.
- Religious Isolation.
- To my Friends.
- A Modern Sappho.
- The New Sirens.
- The Voice.
- To Fausta.
- Stagyrus.
- To a Gipsy Child.
- The Hayswater Boat.
- The Forsaken Merman.
- The World and the Quietist.
- In Utrumque Paratus.
- Resignation.

Sonnets.

- Quiet Work.
- To a Friend.
- Shakespeare.
- To the Duke of Wellington.
- Written in Butler's Sermons.
- Written in Emerson's Essays.
- To an Independent Preacher.
- To George Cruikshank.
- To a Republican Friend.

1852. Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems.

Empedocles on Etna.
The River.
Excuse.
Indifference.
Too Late.
On the Rhine.
Longing.
The Lake.
Parting.
Absence.
Destiny. (Not reprinted.)
To Marguerite.
Human Life.
Despondency.
Youth's Agitations — A Sonnet.
Self-Deception.
Lines written by a Death-bed. (Afterward, Youth and Calm.)
Tristram and Iseult.
Memorial Verses. (Previously published in *Fraser's Magazine.*)
Courage. (Not reprinted.)
Self-Dependence.
A Summer Night.
The Buried Life.
A Farewell.
Stanzas in Memory of the Author of *Obermann.*
Consolation.
Lines written in Kensington Gardens.
The World's Triumphs — A Sonnet.
The Second Best.
Revolutions.

The Youth of Nature.
The Youth of Man.
Morality.
Progress.
The Future.

1853. Poems.
Sohrab and Rustum.
Cadmus and Harmonia. (A fragment of Empedocles on Etna.)
Philomela.
Thekla's Answer.
The Church of Brou.
The Neckan.
Switzerland.
Richmond Hill. (A fragment of The Youth of Man.)
Requiescat.
The Scholar-Gipsy.
Stanzas in Memory of the Late Edward Quillman.
Power of Youth. (A fragment of The Youth of Man.)

1854. A Farewell.

1855. Poems.
Balder Dead
Separation.

1858. Merope : A Tragedy.

1867. New Poems.
Persistency of Poetry.
Saint Brandan. (*Fraser's Magazine*, July, 1860.)
Sonnets.
A Picture of Newstead.
Rachel. (Three Sonnets.)
East London.
West London.

Anti-Desperation.
Immorality.
Worldly Place.
The Divinity.
The Good Shepherd with the Kid.
Austerity of Poetry.
East and West.
Monica's Last Prayer.
Calais Sands.
Dover Beach.
The Terrace at Berne.
Stanzas composed at Carnæ.
A Southern Night. (Previously published in the *Victoria Regia*, 1861.)
Fragment of Chorus of a "Dejaneira."
Palladium.
Early Death and Fame.
Growing Old.
The Progress of Poesy.
A Nameless Epitaph.
The Last Word.
A Wish.
A Caution to Poets.
Pis-Aller.
Epilogue to Lessing's Laocoön.
Bacchanalia.
Rugby Chapel.
Heine's Grave.
Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse.

1860. The Lord's Messengers. (*Cornhill Magazine*, July.)
1866. Thyrsis. (*Macmillan's Magazine*, April.)
1868. Obermann Once More.

1873. New Rome. (*Cornhill Magazine*, June.)
1877. Haworth Churchyard with Epilogue. (*Fraser's Magazine*, May.)
1881. Geist's Grave. (*Fortnightly Review*, January.)
1882. Westminster Abbey. (*Nineteenth Century Magazine*, January.)
Poor Matthais. (*Macmillan's Magazine*, December.)
1887. Horatian Echo. (*The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, July.)
Kaiser Dead. (*Fortnightly Review*, July.)

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1859. England and the Italian Question.
1861. Popular Education in France.
On Translating Homer.
1864. A French Eton.
1865. Essays in Criticism.
1867. On Study of Celtic Literature.
1868. Schools and Universities on the Continent.
1869. Culture and Anarchy.
1870. St. Paul and Protestantism.
1871. Friendship's Garland.
1873. Literature and Dogma.
1874. Higher Schools and Universities in Germany.
1875. God and the Bible.
1877. Last Essays on Church and Religion.
1879. Mixed Essays.
1882. Irish Essays.
1885. Discourses in America.
1888. Essays in Criticism, Second Series.
Special Report on Elementary Education Abroad.
Civilization in the United States.

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Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881).
Thomas B. Macaulay (1800–1859).
Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–1861).
Alfred Tennyson (1809–1892).
Charles R. Darwin (1809–1882).
William M. Thackeray (1811–1863).
Robert Browning (1812–1889).
Charles Dickens (1812–1870).
George Eliot (1819–1880).
John Ruskin (1819–1900).
Herbert Spencer (1820–1903).

William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878).
Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882).
Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864).
John G. Whittier (1807–1892).
Henry W. Longfellow (1807–1882).
Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–1894).
James Russell Lowell (1819–1891).

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Tennyson, Ruskin, and Other Literary Estimates, by Frederic Harrison.

Studies in Interpretation, by W. H. Hudson.

Corrected Impressions on Matthew Arnold, by G. E. B. Saintsbury.

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Matthew Arnold, by Andrew Lang, in *Century Magazine*, 1881–1882, p. 849.

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SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

AND OTHER POEMS

NARRATIVE POEMS

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM°

AN EPISODE

And the first grey of morning fill'd the east,°
And the fog rose out of the Oxus° stream.
But all the Tartar camp° along the stream
Was hush'd, and still the men were plunged in sleep;
Sohrab alone, he slept not; all night long
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed;
But when the grey dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's° tent.
Through the black Tartar tents he pass'd, which stood
Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere°;
Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,
And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink — the spot where first a boat,
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crown'd the top
With a clay fort; but that was fall'n, and now

The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the thick piled carpets in the tent,
And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dull'd; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said: —
"Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?"
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said: —
"Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa! it is I.
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe
Sleep; but I sleep not; all night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab° bid me seek
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand,° before the army march'd;
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan° first
I came among the Tartars and bore arms,
I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,
At my boy's years,° the courage of a man.
This too thou know'st, that while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
And beat the Persians back on every field,
I seek one man, one man, and one alone —
Rustum, my father; who I hoped should greet,
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field,
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hoped, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.

Let the two armies rest to-day; but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man; if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall —
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
Dim is the rumour of a common fight,°
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk°;
But of a single combat fame speaks clear."
He spoke; and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said: —
"O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance° with us
Who love thee, but must press for ever first,
In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen°?
That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,
And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum — seek him not through fight!
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!
But far hence seek him, for he is not here.
For now it is not as when I was young,
When Rustum was in front of every fray;
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seistan,° with Zal, his father old.
Whether that his own mighty strength at last
Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age,
Or in some quarrel° with the Persian King.°
There go°! — Thou wilt not? Yet my heart forebodes
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.

Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
To us; fain therefore send thee hence, in peace
To seek thy father, not seek single fights
In vain; — but who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son?
Go, I will grant thee what thy heart desires."
So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay;
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword°;
And on his head he set his sheep-skin cap,
Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-Kul°;
And raised the curtain of his tent, and call'd
His herald to his side, and went abroad.
The sun by this had risen, and clear'd the fog
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands.
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed
Into the open plain; so Haman° bade —
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse, they stream'd;
As when some grey November morn the files,
In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes
Stream over Casbin° and the southern slopes
Of Elburz,° from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some frore° Caspian reed-bed, southward bound
For the warm Persian sea-board — so they stream'd.
The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,
First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears;
Large men, large steeds; who from Bokhara° come
And Khiva,° and ferment the milk of mares.°

Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns° of the south,
The Tukas,° and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck° and the Caspian sands;
Light men and on light steeds, who only drink
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
From far, and a more doubtful service own'd;
The Tartars of Ferghana,° from the banks
Of the Jaxartes,° men with scanty beards
And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder hordes
Who roam o'er Kipchak° and the northern waste,
Kalmucks° and unkempt Kuzzaks,° tribes who stray
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,°
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere;
These all filed out from camp into the plain.
And on the other side the Persians form'd;—
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seem'd,
The Ilyats of Khorassan°; and behind,
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel.
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came,
And check'd his ranks, and fix'd° them where they stood.
And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said:—
"Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.
But choose a champion from the Persian lords
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man."

As, in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,
A shiver runs through the deep corn° for joy —
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.
But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,°
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,°
That vast sky-neighbouring mountain of milk snow;
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,
Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries —
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows —
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.
And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up
To counsel; Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the King°;
These came and counsell'd, and then Gudurz said:
"Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.°
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits°
And sullen, and has pitch'd his tents apart.
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name.
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up."
So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and cried: —
"Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said!
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man."

He spake: and Peran-Wisa turn'd, and strode
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd,
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,
Just pitch'd; the high pavilion in the midst
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camp'd around.
And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found
Rustum; his morning meal was done, but still
The table stood before him, charged with food —
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark green melons; and there Rustum sate°
Listless, and held a falcon° on his wrist,
And play'd with it; but Gudurz came and stood
Before him; and he look'd, and saw him stand,
And with a cry sprang up and dropp'd the bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said: —
"Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight.
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink."
But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said: —
"Not now! a time will come to eat and drink,
But not to-day; to-day has other needs.
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze;
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion — and thou know'st his name —
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart;
And he is young, and Iran's° chiefs are old,
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose!"

He spoke; but Rustum answer'd with a smile: —
"Go to°! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
Am older; if the young are weak, the King
Errs strangely; for the King, for Kai Khosroo,°
Himself is young, and honours younger men,
And lets the aged moulder to their graves.
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young —
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?
For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl° I have —
A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,°
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,
And he has none to guard his weak old age.
There would I go, and hang my armour up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man,
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more."
He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply: —
"What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say:
Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men."°
And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply: —
"O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words?
Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,

Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?
Are not they mortal, am not I myself?
But who for men of nought would do great deeds?
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame!
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms°;
Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd
In single fight with any mortal man."
He spoke, and frown'd; and Gudurz turn'd, and ran
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy —
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and call'd
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel; the arms he chose
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,°
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
And, from the fluted spine atop, a plume
Of horsehair waved, a scarlet horsehair plume.
So arm'd, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse,
Follow'd him like a faithful hound at heel —
Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the earth,
The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,
And rear'd him; a bright bay, with lofty crest,
Dight° with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know.
So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd
The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd.
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hail'd; but the Tartars knew not who he was.
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,

By sandy Bahrein,° in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale° of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands —
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came.
  And Rustum to the Persian front advanced,
And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came.
And as afield the reapers cut a swath
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
And on each side are squares of standing corn,
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare —
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.
  As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire —
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,
When the frost flowers° the whiten'd window-panes —
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum eyed
The unknown adventurous youth, who from afar
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs; long he perused°
His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.
For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd;
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound —
So slender Sohrab seem'd,° so softly rear'd.

And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul
As he beheld him coming; and he stood,
And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said:—
"O thou young man, the air of Heaven is soft,
And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold!
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
Behold me! I am vast,° and clad in iron,
And tried°; and I have stood on many a field
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe—
Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.°
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
Be govern'd°! quit the Tartar host, and come
To Iran, and be as my son to me,
And fight beneath my banner till I die!
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."
So he spake, mildly; Sohrab heard his voice,
The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw
His giant figure planted on the sand,
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
Hath builded on the waste in former years
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
Streak'd with its first grey hairs;—hope filled his soul,
And he ran forward and embraced his knees,
And clasp'd his hand within his own, and said:—
"O, by thy father's head°! by thine own soul!
Art thou not Rustum°? speak! art thou not he?"
But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,
And turn'd away, and spake to his own soul:—
"Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean!
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say: *Rustum is here!*
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,

But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.
And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall,
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry:
'I challenged once, when the two armies camp'd
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight; but they
Shrank, only Rustum dared; then he and I
Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away.'
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud;
Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me."
And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud:—
"Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus
Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast call'd
By challenge forth; make good thy vaunt,° or yield!
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee!
For well I know, that did great Rustum stand
Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,
There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this—
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt and yield,
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer-floods,
Oxus in summer wash them all away."
He spoke; and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet:—
"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so°!
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.

Begin! thou art more vast, more dread than I,
And thou art proved, I know, and I am young —
But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
We know not, and no search will make us know;
Only the event will teach us in its hour."
He spoke, and Rustum answer'd not, but hurl'd
His spear; down from the shoulder, down it came,
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk,
That long has tower'd° in the airy clouds,
Drops like a plummet; Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the spear
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide; — then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck° Rustum's shield; sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he
Could wield; an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough — like those which men in treeless plains
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,
Hyphasis° or Hydaspes,° when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time
Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,°
And strewn the channels with torn boughs — so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside,

Lithe as the glancing° snake, and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.
And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell
To his knees, and with his fingers clutch'd the sand;
And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his sword,
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand;
But he look'd on, and smiled, nor bared his sword,
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said:—
"Thou strik'st too hard! that club of thine will float
Upon the summer-floods, and not my bones.
But rise, and be not wroth! not wroth am I;
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.
Thou say'st, thou art not Rustum; be it so!
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too—
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow° roar of dying men;
But never was my heart thus touch'd before.
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host,
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou
Mayst fight; fight *them*, when they confront thy spear!
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!"
He ceased, but while he spake, Rustum had risen,
And stood erect, trembling with rage; his club
He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear,

Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right-hand
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn-star,°
The baleful sign of fevers; dust had soil'd
His stately crest,° and dimm'd his glittering arms.
His breast heaved, his lips foam'd, and twice his voice
Was choked with rage; at last these words broke way:—
"Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!
Curl'd minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!
Fight, let me hear thy hateful voice no more!
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;
But on the Oxus-sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war; I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!
Remember all thy valour°; try thy feints
And cunning! all the pity I had is gone;
Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles.°"
He spoke, and Sohrab kindled° at his taunts,
And he too drew his sword; at once they rush'd
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west; their shields
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees — such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd.
And you would say that sun and stars took part
In that unnatural° conflict; for a cloud°
Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose

Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled° on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes
And labouring breath; first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out; the steel-spiked spear
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,°
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest
He shore° away, and that proud horsehair plume,
Never till now defiled, sank to the dust;
And Rustum bow'd his head°; but then the gloom
Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air,
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry;—
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pain'd desert-lion, who all day
Hath trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side,
And comes at night to die upon the sand.
The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked for fear,
And Oxus curdled° as it cross'd his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,
And struck again; and again Rustum bow'd
His head; but this time all the blade, like glass,
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in the hand the hilt remain'd alone.
Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful eyes
Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted: *Rustum°!*—Sohrab heard that shout,

And shrank amazed; back he recoil'd one step,
And scann'd with blinking eyes the advancing form;
And then he stood bewilder'd; and he dropp'd
His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side.
He reel'd, and staggering back, sank to the ground;
And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair —
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.
Then, with a bitter smile,° Rustum began: —
"Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent.
Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
And then all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,
To glad° thy father in his weak old age.
Fool, thou art slain, and by an unknown man!
Dearer to the red jackals° shalt thou be
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old."
And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied: —
"Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For were I match'd with ten such men as thee,
And I were that which till to-day I was,
They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that belovéd name unnerved my arm —
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield

Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd foe.
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!
My father, whom I seek through all the world,
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!"
As when some hunter° in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,
And follow'd her to find her where she fell
Far off;—anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off descries
His huddling young left sole°; at that, he checks
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers — never more
Shall the lake glass° her, flying over it;
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by —
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss,
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.
But, with a cold incredulous voice, he said: —
"What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
The mighty Rustum never had a son."
And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied: —
"Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I.
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,

Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be?
Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells
With that old king, her father, who grows grey
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honour, when the war is done.
But a dark rumour will be bruited up,°
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;
And then will that defenceless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more,
But that in battle with a nameless foe,
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain."
He spoke; and as he ceased, he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listen'd, plunged in thought.
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all —
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms —
And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style° of Rustum's son;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deem'd he; yet he listen'd, plunged in thought

And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking Ocean sets to shore
At the full moon; tears gather'd in his eyes;
For he remember'd his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,
The shepherd from his mountain-lodge descries
A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds — so Rustum saw
His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;
And that old king,° her father, who loved well
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer-time —
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that Youth,
Of age and looks° to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass — so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said: —
"O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have loved.
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false — thou art not Rustum's son.
For Rustum had no son; one child he had —
But one — a girl; who with her mother now
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us —
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war."

But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath; for now
The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce,
And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die—
But first he would convince his stubborn foe;
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:—
"Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.
I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm° I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore."
He spoke; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks,
And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand
Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,
That the hard iron corslet° clank'd aloud;
And to his heart he press'd the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:—
"Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie!
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son."
Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points
Prick'd; as a cunning° workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands—
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that griffin,° which of old rear'd Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,
A helpless babe, among the mountain-rocks;

Him that kind creature found, and rear'd, and loved —
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bared that image on his arm,
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touch'd it with his hand and said: —
"How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?"
He spoke; but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood
Speechless; and then he utter'd one sharp cry:
O boy — thy father! — and his voice choked there.
And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life; and life
Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,
And they stood wide with horror; and he seized
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair, —
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms;
And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs choked him; and he clutch'd his sword,
To draw it, and for ever let life out.
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
And with a soothing voice he spake, and said: —
"Father, forbear! for I but meet to-day
The doom which at my birth was written down
In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand.°
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,
I know it! but fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; fate, fate engaged

The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this! I find
My father; let me feel that I have found!°
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say: *My son!*
Quick! quick! for number'd are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away—
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.°
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be."
So said he, and his voice released the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears brake forth; he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts,
When they saw Rustum's grief; and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one then to the other moved
His head, as if inquiring what their grief
Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,
The big warm tears roll'd down, and caked° the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said:—
"Ruksh, now thou grievest; but, O Ruksh, thy feet
Should first have rotted on their nimble joints,
Or ere they brought thy master to this field!"
But Sohrab look'd upon the horse and said:—
"Is this, then, Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,
My terrible father's terrible horse! and said,
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane!
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;

For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,
And seen the River of Helmund,° and the Lake
Of Zirrah°; and the aged Zal himself
Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter soak'd with wine,
And said: *O Ruksh! bear Rustum well!* — but I
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream;
But lodged among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
The desert rivers, Moorghab° and Tejend,°
Kohik,° and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
The northern Sir°; and this great Oxus stream,
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."
Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewail'd: —
"Oh, that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!"
But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied: —
"Desire not that, my father! thou must live.
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
As some are born to be obscured, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age;
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come! thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these!
Let me entreat for them; what have they done?

They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seistan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,
Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends.
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound° above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all.
That so the passing horseman on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and cry:
Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill!
And I be not forgotten in my grave."
And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied: —
"Fear not! as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be; for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.
And I will spare thy host; yea, let them go!
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace!
What should I do with slaying any more?
For would that all that I have ever slain
Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes,
And they who were call'd champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have —
And I were nothing but a common man,

A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,
So thou mightest live too, my son, my son!
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine! and I might die, not thou;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan;
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;
And say: *O son, I weep thee not too sore,*
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end!
But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age,
And I shall never end this life of blood."

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied:—
"A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man!
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,
Not yet! but thou shalt have it on that day,°
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt blue sea,
From laying thy dear master in his grave."

And Rustum gazed in Sohrab's face, and said:—
"Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."

He spoke; and Sohrab smiled on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased
His wound's imperious anguish; but the blood
Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flow'd with the stream;— all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soil'd,
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,
By children whom their nurses call with haste

Indoors from the sun's eye; his head droop'd low,
His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay —
White, with eyes closed; only when heavy gasps,
Deep heavy gasps quivering through all his frame,
Convulsed him back to life, he open'd them,
And fix'd them feebly on his father's face;
Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.
So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead;
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd
By Jemshid in Persepolis,° to bear
His house, now 'mid their broken flights of steps
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side —
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.
And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darken'd all; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loosed, and fires
Began to twinkle through the fog; for now
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal;
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward, the Tartars by the river marge;
And Rustum and his son were left alone.
But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian° waste,
Under the solitary moon; — he flow'd

Right for the polar star,° past Orgunjè,°
Brimming, and bright, and large; then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents; that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles —
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer — till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home° of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars°
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

SAINT BRANDAN°

Saint Brandan sails the northern main;
The brotherhood of saints are glad.
He greets them once, he sails again;
So late! — such storms! — The Saint is mad!

He heard, across the howling seas,
Chime convent-bells on wintry nights;
He saw, on spray-swept Hebrides,°
Twinkle the monastery-lights;

But north, still north, Saint Brandan steer'd —
And now no bells, no convents more!
The hurtling Polar lights° are near'd,
The sea without a human shore.

At last — (it was the Christmas night;
Stars shone after a day of storm) —
He sees float past an iceberg white,
And on it — Christ! — a living form.

That furtive mien, that scowling eye,
Of hair that red° and tufted fell —
It is — Oh, where shall Brandan fly? —
The traitor Judas, out of hell!

Palsied with terror, Brandan sate°;
The moon was bright, the iceberg near.
He hears a voice sigh humbly: "Wait!
By high permission I am here.

"One moment wait, thou holy man
On earth my crime, my death, they knew;
My name is under all men's ban —
Ah, tell them of my respite too!

"Tell them, one blessed Christmas-night —
(It was the first after I came,
Breathing self-murder,° frenzy, spite,
To rue my guilt in endless flame) —

"I felt, as I in torment lay
'Mid the souls plagued by heavenly power,
An angel touch my arm, and say:
Go hence, and cool thyself an hour!

"'Ah, whence this mercy, Lord?' I said.
The Leper recollect,° said he,
Who ask'd the passers-by for aid,
In Joppa,° *and thy charity.*

"Then I remember'd how I went,
In Joppa, through the public street,
One morn when the sirocco spent
Its storms of dust with burning heat;

"And in the street a leper sate,
Shivering with fever, naked, old;
Sand raked his sores from heel to pate,
The hot wind fever'd him five-fold.

"He gazed upon me as I pass'd
And murmur'd: *Help me, or I die!* —
To the poor wretch my cloak I cast,
Saw him look eased, and hurried by.

"Oh, Brandan, think what grace divine,
What blessing must full goodness shower,
When fragment of it small, like mine,
Hath such inestimable power!

"Well-fed, well-clothed, well-friended, I
Did that chance act of good, that one!
Then went my way to kill and lie —
Forgot my good as soon as done.

"That germ of kindness, in the womb
Of mercy caught, did not expire;
Outlives my guilt, outlives my doom,
And friends me in the pit of fire.

"Once every year, when carols wake,
On earth, the Christmas-night's repose,
Arising from the sinner's lake,
I journey to these healing snows.

"I stanch with ice my burning breast,
With silence balm my whirling brain.
Oh, Brandan! to this hour of rest
That Joppan leper's ease was pain." —

Tears started to Saint Brandan's eyes;
He bow'd his head, he breathed a prayer —
Then look'd, and lo, the frosty skies!
The iceberg, and no Judas there!

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN°

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses° play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go —
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know:
"Margaret°! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain —
Surely she will come again!

Call her once and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!
The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!
One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore;
Then come down!
She will not come though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged° all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail° and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.°
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea;
She said: "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world — ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with thee."
I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!"
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say;
Come!" I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."

But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd° to the holy book!
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy!
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun°!"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh;
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children;
Come children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows coldly;
Lights shine in the town.

She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing: "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,°
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side —
And then come back down.
Singing: "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT°

I

TRISTRAM

Tristram. Is she not come°? The messenger was sure.
Prop me upon the pillows once again —
Raise me, my page! this cannot long endure.
— Christ, what a night! how the sleet whips the pane!
What lights will those out to the northward be°?
The Page. The lanterns of the fishing-boats at sea.
Tristram. Soft — who is that, stands by the dying fire?
The Page. Iseult.°
Tristram. Ah! not the Iseult I desire.

* * * * * * *

What Knight is this so weak and pale,
Though the locks are yet brown on his noble head,
Propt on pillows in his bed,
Gazing seaward for the light
Of some ship that fights the gale
On this wild December night?
Over the sick man's feet is spread
A dark green forest-dress;
A gold harp leans against the bed,
Ruddy in the fire's light.
I know him by his harp of gold,
Famous in Arthur's court° of old;
I know him by his forest-dress —
The peerless hunter, harper, knight,
Tristram of Lyoness.°

What Lady is this, whose silk attire
Gleams so rich in the light of the fire?
The ringlets on her shoulders lying
In their flitting lustre vying
With the clasp of burnish'd gold
Which her heavy robe doth hold.
Her looks are mild, her fingers slight
As the driven snow are white°;
But her cheeks are sunk and pale.
Is it that the bleak sea-gale
Beating from the Atlantic sea
On this coast of Brittany,
Nips too keenly the sweet flower?
Is it that a deep fatigue
Hath come on her, a chilly fear,
Passing all her youthful hour
Spinning with her maidens here,
Listlessly through the window-bars
Gazing seawards many a league,
From her lonely shore-built tower,
While the knights are at the wars?
Or, perhaps, has her young heart
Felt already some deeper smart,
Of those that in secret the heart-strings rive,
Leaving her sunk and pale, though fair?
Who is this snowdrop by the sea? —
I know her by her mildness rare,
Her snow-white hands, her golden hair;
I know her by her rich silk dress,
And her fragile loveliness —
The sweetest Christian soul alive,
Iseult of Brittany.

Iseult of Brittany? — but where
Is that other Iseult fair,
That proud, first Iseult, Cornwall's queen?
She, whom Tristram's ship of yore
From Ireland to Cornwall bore,
To Tyntagel,° to the side
Of King Marc,° to be his bride?
She who, as they voyaged, quaff'd
With Tristram that spiced magic draught,
Which since then for ever rolls
Through their blood, and binds their souls,
Working love, but working teen°? —
There were two Iseults who did sway
Each her hour of Tristram's day;
But one possess'd his waning time,
The other his resplendent prime.
Behold her here, the patient flower,
Who possess'd his darker hour!
Iseult of the Snow-White Hand
Watches pale by Tristram's bed.
She is here who had his gloom,
Where art thou who hadst his bloom?
One such kiss as those of yore
Might thy dying knight restore!
Does the love-draught work no more?
Art thou cold, or false, or dead,
Iseult of Ireland?

* * * * * * *

Loud howls the wind, sharp patters the rain,
And the knight sinks back on his pillows again.
He is weak with fever and pain,
And his spirit is not clear.

Hark! he mutters in his sleep,
As he wanders° far from here,
Changes place and time of year,
And his closéd eye doth sweep
O'er some fair unwintry sea,°
Not this fierce Atlantic deep,
While he mutters brokenly: —

Tristram. The calm sea shines, loose hang the vessel's sails;
Before us are the sweet green fields of Wales,
And overhead the cloudless sky of May. —
"*Ah, would I were in those green fields at play,*
Not pent on ship-board this delicious day!
Tristram, I pray thee, of thy courtesy,
Reach me my golden phial stands by thee,
But pledge me in it first for courtesy." —
Ha! dost thou start? are thy lips blanch'd like mine?
Child, 'tis no true draught this, 'tis poison'd wine!
Iseult! . . .

* * * * * * *

Ah, sweet angels, let him dream!
Keep his eyelids! let him seem
Not this fever-wasted wight
Thinn'd and paled before his time,
But the brilliant youthful knight
In the glory of his prime,
Sitting in the gilded barge,
At thy side, thou lovely charge,
Bending gaily o'er thy hand,
Iseult of Ireland!
And she too, that princess fair,
If her bloom be now less rare,

Let her have her youth again —
Let her be as she was then!
Let her have her proud dark eyes,
And her petulant quick replies —
Let her sweep her dazzling hand
With its gesture of command,
And shake back her raven hair
With the old imperious air!
As of old, so let her be,
That first Iseult, princess bright,
Chatting with her youthful knight
As he steers her o'er the sea,
Quitting at her father's will
The green isle° where she was bred,
And her bower in Ireland,
For the surge-beat Cornish strand
Where the prince whom she must wed
Dwells on loud Tyntagel's hill,°
High above the sounding sea.
And that potion rare her mother
Gave her, that her future lord,
Gave her, that King Marc and she,
Might drink it on their marriage-day,
And for ever love each other —
Let her, as she sits on board,
Ah, sweet saints, unwittingly!
See it shine, and take it up,
And to Tristram laughing say:
"Sir Tristram, of thy courtesy,
Pledge me in my golden cup!"
Let them drink it — let their hands
Tremble, and their cheeks be flame,
As they feel the fatal bands

Of a love they dare not name,
With a wild delicious pain,
Twine about their hearts again!
Let the early summer be
Once more round them, and the sea
Blue, and o'er its mirror kind
Let the breath of the May-wind,
Wandering through their drooping sails,
Die on the green fields of Wales!
Let a dream like this restore
What his eye must see no more!°

Tristram. Chill blows the wind, the pleasaunce-walks° are drear —
Madcap, what jest was this, to meet me here?
Were feet like those made for so wild a way?
The southern winter-parlour, by my fay,°
Had been the likeliest trysting-place to-day!
"Tristram! — nay, nay — thou must not take my hand! —
Tristram! — sweet love! — we are betray'd — out-plann'd.
Fly — save thyself — save me! — I dare not stay." —
One last kiss first! — *"'Tis vain — to horse — away!"*

* * * * * * *

Ah! sweet saints, his dream doth move
Faster surely than it should,
From the fever in his blood!
All the spring-time of his love
Is already gone and past,
And instead thereof is seen
Its winter, which endureth still —
Tyntagel on its surge-beat hill,
The pleasaunce-walks, the weeping queen,

The flying leaves, the straining blast,
And that long, wild kiss — their last.°
And this rough December-night,
And his burning fever-pain,
Mingle with his hurrying dream,
Till they rule it, till he seem
The press'd fugitive again,
The love-desperate banish'd knight
With a fire in his brain
Flying o'er the stormy main.
— Whither does he wander now?
Haply in his dreams the wind
Wafts him here, and lets him find
The lovely orphan child° again
In her castle by the coast;
The youngest, fairest chatelaine,°
Whom this realm of France can boast,
Our snowdrop by the Atlantic sea,
Iseult of Brittany.
And — for through the haggard air,
The stain'd arms, the matted hair
Of that stranger-knight ill-starr'd,°
There gleam'd something, which recall'd
The Tristram who in better days
Was Launcelot's guest at Joyous Gard° —
Welcomed here,° and here install'd,
Tended of his fever here,
Haply he seems again to move
His young guardian's heart with love
In his exiled loneliness,
In his stately, deep distress,
Without a word, without a tear.
— Ah! 'tis well he should retrace

His tranquil life in this lone place;
His gentle bearing at the side
Of his timid youthful bride;
His long rambles by the shore
On winter-evenings, when the roar
Of the near waves came, sadly grand,
Through the dark, up the drown'd sand,
Or his endless reveries
In the woods, where the gleams play
On the grass under the trees,
Passing the long summer's day
Idle as a mossy stone
In the forest-depths alone,
The chase neglected, and his hound
Couch'd beside him on the ground.°
— Ah! what trouble's on his brow?
Hither let him wander now;
Hither, to the quiet hours
Pass'd among these heaths of ours
By the grey Atlantic sea;
Hours, if not of ecstasy,
From violent anguish surely free!

Tristram. All red with blood the whirling river flows,
The wide plain rings, the dazed air throbs with blows.
Upon us are the chivalry of Rome —
Their spears are down, their steeds are bathed in foam.°
"Up, Tristram, up," men cry, "thou moonstruck knight°!
What foul fiend rides thee°? On into the fight!"
— Above the din her° voice is in my ears;
I see her form glide through the crossing spears. —
Iseult! . . .

* * * * * * *

Ah! he wanders forth again°;
We cannot keep him; now, as then,
There's a secret in his breast°
Which will never let him rest.
These musing fits in the green wood
They cloud the brain, they dull the blood!
—His sword is sharp, his horse is good;
Beyond the mountains will he see
The famous towns of Italy,
And label with the blessed sign°
The heathen Saxons on the Rhine.
At Arthur's side he fights once more
With the Roman Emperor.°
There's many a gay knight where he goes
Will help him to forget his care;
The march, the leaguer,° Heaven's blithe air,
The neighing steeds, the ringing blows—
Sick pining comes not where these are.
Ah! what boots it,° that the jest
Lightens every other brow,
What, that every other breast
Dances as the trumpets blow,
If one's own heart beats not light
On the waves of the toss'd fight,
If oneself cannot get free
From the clog of misery?
Thy lovely youthful wife grows pale
Watching by the salt sea-tide
With her children at her side
For the gleam of thy white sail.
Home, Tristram, to thy halls again!
To our lonely sea complain,
To our forests tell thy pain!

Tristram. All round the forest sweeps off, black in shade,
But it is moonlight in the open glade;
And in the bottom of the glade shine clear
The forest-chapel and the fountain near.
— I think, I have a fever in my blood;
Come, let me leave the shadow of this wood,
Ride down, and bathe my hot brow in the flood.
— Mild shines the cold spring in the moon's clear light;
God! 'tis *her* face plays in the waters bright.
"Fair love," she says, "canst thou forget so soon,
At this soft hour under this sweet moon?" —
Iseult! . . .

* * * * * * *

Ah, poor soul! if this be so,
Only death can balm thy woe.
The solitudes of the green wood
Had no medicine for thy mood;
The rushing battle clear'd thy blood
As little as did solitude.
— Ah! his eyelids slowly break
Their hot seals, and let him wake;
What new change shall we now see?
A happier? Worse it cannot be.

Tristram. Is my page here? Come, turn me to the fire!
Upon the window-panes the moon shines bright;
The wind is down — but she'll not come to-night.
Ah no! she is asleep in Cornwall now,
Far hence; her dreams are fair — smooth is her brow
Of me she recks not,° nor my vain desire.

— I have had dreams, I have had dreams, my page,
Would take a score years from a strong man's age;
And with a blood like mine, will leave, I fear,
Scant leisure for a second messenger.
— My princess, art thou there? Sweet, do not wait!
To bed, and sleep! my fever is gone by;
To-night my page shall keep me company.
Where do the children sleep? kiss them for me!
Poor child, thou art almost as pale as I;
This comes of nursing long and watching late.
To bed — good night!°

* * * * * * *

She left the gleam-lit fireplace,
She came to the bed-side;
She took his hands in hers — her tears
Down on his wasted fingers rain'd.
She raised her eyes upon his face —
Not with a look of wounded pride,
A look as if the heart complained —
Her look was like a sad embrace;
The gaze of one who can divine
A grief, and sympathise.
Sweet flower! thy children's eyes
Are not more innocent than thine.
But they sleep in shelter'd rest,
Like helpless birds in the warm nest,
On the castle's southern side;
Where feebly comes the mournful roar
Of buffeting wind and surging tide
Through many a room and corridor.
— Full on their window the moon's ray
Makes their chamber as bright as day.

It shines upon the blank white walls,
And on the snowy pillow falls,
And on two angel-heads doth play
Turn'd to each other — the eyes closed,
The lashes on the cheeks reposed.
Round each sweet brow the cap close-set
Hardly lets peep the golden hair;
Through the soft-open'd lips the air
Scarcely moves the coverlet.
One little wandering arm is thrown
At random on the counterpane,
And often the fingers close in haste
As if their baby-owner chased
The butterflies again.
This stir they have, and this alone;
But else they are so still!
— Ah, tired madcaps! you lie still;
But were you at the window now,
To look forth on the fairy sight
Of your illumined haunts by night,
To see the park-glades where you play
Far lovelier than they are by day,
To see the sparkle on the eaves,
And upon every giant-bough
Of those old oaks, whose wet red leaves
Are jewell'd with bright drops of rain —
How would your voices run again!
And far beyond the sparkling trees
Of the castle-park one sees
The bare heaths spreading, clear as day,
Moor behind moor, far, far away,
Into the heart of Brittany.
And here and there, lock'd by the land,

Long inlets of smooth glittering sea,
And many a stretch of watery sand
All shining in the white moon-beams —
But you see fairer in your dreams!

What voices are these on the clear night-air?
What lights in the court — what steps on the stair?

II

ISEULT OF IRELAND°

Tristram. Raise the light, my page! that I may see her. —
Thou art come at last, then, haughty Queen!
Long I've waited, long I've fought my fever;
Late thou comest, cruel thou hast been.

Iseult. Blame me not, poor sufferer! that I tarried;
Bound I was, I could not break the band.
Chide not with the past, but feel the present!
I am here — we meet — I hold thy hand.

Tristram. Thou art come, indeed — thou hast rejoin'd me;
Thou hast dared it — but too late to save.
Fear not now that men should tax thine honour!
I am dying: build — (thou may'st) — my grave!

Iseult. Tristram, ah, for love of Heaven, speak kindly!
What, I hear these bitter words from thee?
Sick with grief I am, and faint with travel —
Take my hand — dear Tristram, look on me!

Tristram. I forgot, thou comest from thy voyage —
Yes, the spray is on thy cloak and hair.
But thy dark eyes are not dimm'd, proud Iseult!
And thy beauty never was more fair.

Iseult. Ah, harsh flatterer! let alone my beauty!
I, like thee, have left my youth afar.
Take my hand, and touch these wasted fingers —
See my cheek and lips, how white they are!

Tristram. Thou art paler — but thy sweet charm, Iseult!
Would not fade with the dull years away.
Ah, how fair thou standest in the moonlight!
I forgive thee, Iseult! — thou wilt stay?

Iseult. Fear me not, I will be always with thee;
I will watch thee, tend thee, soothe thy pain;
Sing thee tales of true, long-parted lovers,
Join'd at evening of their days again.

Tristram. No, thou shalt not speak! I should be finding
Something alter'd in thy courtly tone.
Sit — sit by me! I will think, we've lived so
In the green wood, all our lives, alone.

Iseult. Alter'd, Tristram? Not in courts, believe me,
Love like mine is alter'd in the breast;
Courtly life is light and cannot reach it —
Ah! it lives, because so deep-suppress'd!

What, thou think'st men speak in courtly chambers
Words by which the wretched are consoled?
What, thou think'st this aching brow was cooler,
Circled, Tristram, by a band of gold?

Royal state with Marc, my deep-wrong'd husband —
  That was bliss to make my sorrows flee!
Silken courtiers whispering honied nothings° —
  Those were friends to make me false to thee!

Ah, on which, if both our lots were balanced,
  Was indeed the heaviest burden thrown —
Thee, a pining exile in thy forest,
  Me, a smiling queen upon my throne?

Vain and strange debate, where both have suffer'd,
  Both have pass'd a youth consumed and sad,
Both have brought their anxious day to evening,
  And have now short space for being glad!

Join'd we are henceforth; nor will thy people,
  Nor thy younger Iseult take it ill,
That a former rival shares her office,
  When she sees her humbled, pale, and still.

I, a faded watcher by thy pillow,
  I, a statue on thy chapel-floor,
Pour'd in prayer before the Virgin-Mother,
  Rouse no anger, make no rivals more.

She will cry: "Is this the foe I dreaded?
  This his idol? this that royal bride?
Ah, an hour of health would purge his eyesight!
  Stay, pale queen! for ever by my side."

Hush, no words! that smile, I see, forgives me.
  I am now thy nurse, I bid thee sleep.
Close thine eyes — this flooding moonlight blinds them! —
  Nay, all's well again! thou must not weep.

Tristram. I am happy! yet I feel, there's something
Swells my heart, and takes my breath away.
Through a mist I see thee; near — come nearer!
Bend — bend down! — I yet have much to say.

Iseult. Heaven! his head sinks back upon the pillow —
Tristram! Tristram! let thy heart not fail!
Call on God and on the holy angels!
What, love, courage! — Christ! he is so pale.

Tristram. Hush, 'tis vain, I feel my end approaching!
This is what my mother said should be,
When the fierce pains took her in the forest,
The deep draughts of death, in bearing me.

"Son," she said, "thy name shall be of sorrow;
Tristram art thou call'd for my death's sake."
So she said, and died in the drear forest.
Grief since then his home with me doth make.°

I am dying. — Start not, nor look wildly!
Me, thy living friend, thou canst not save.
But, since living we were ununited,
Go not far, O Iseult! from my grave.

Close mine eyes, then seek the princess Iseult;
Speak her fair, she is of royal blood!
Say, I will'd so, that thou stay beside me —
She will grant it; she is kind and good.

Now to sail the seas of death I leave thee —
One last kiss upon the living shore!

Iseult. Tristram! — Tristram! — stay — receive me with thee!
Iseult leaves thee, Tristram! never more.°

* * * * * *

You see them clear — the moon shines bright.
Slow, slow and softly, where she stood,
She sinks upon the ground; — her hood
Has fallen back; her arms outspread
Still hold her lover's hand; her head
Is bow'd, half-buried, on the bed.
O'er the blanch'd sheet her raven hair
Lies in disorder'd streams; and there,
Strung like white stars, the pearls still are,
And the golden bracelets, heavy and rare,
Flash on her white arms still.
The very same which yesternight
Flash'd in the silver sconces'° light,
When the feast was gay and the laughter loud
In Tyntagel's palace proud.
But then they deck'd a restless ghost
With hot-flush'd cheeks and brilliant eyes,
And quivering lips on which the tide
Of courtly speech abruptly died,
And a glance which over the crowded floor,
The dancers, and the festive host,
Flew ever to the door.°
That the knights eyed her in surprise,
And the dames whispered scoffingly:
"Her moods, good lack, they pass like showers!
But yesternight and she would be
As pale and still as wither'd flowers,
And now to-night she laughs and speaks
And has a colour in her cheeks;
Christ keep us from such fantasy!" —

Yes, now the longing is o'erpast,
Which, dogg'd° by fear and fought by shame,
Shook her weak bosom day and night,
Consumed her beauty like a flame,
And dimm'd it like the desert-blast.
And though the bed-clothes hide her face,
Yet were it lifted to the light,
The sweet expression of her brow
Would charm the gazer, till his thought
Erased the ravages of time,
Fill'd up the hollow cheek, and brought
A freshness back as of her prime —
So healing is her quiet now.
So perfectly the lines express
A tranquil, settled loveliness,
Her younger rival's purest grace.

The air of the December-night
Steals coldly around the chamber bright,
Where those lifeless lovers be;
Swinging with it, in the light
Flaps the ghostlike tapestry.
And on the arras wrought you see
A stately Huntsman, clad in green,
And round him a fresh forest-scene.
On that clear forest-knoll he stays,
With his pack round him, and delays.
He stares and stares, with troubled face,
At this huge, gleam-lit fireplace,
At that bright, iron-figured door,
And those blown rushes on the floor.
He gazes down into the room
With heated cheeks and flurried air,

And to himself he seems to say:
"What place is this, and who are they?
Who is that kneeling Lady fair?
And on his pillows that pale Knight
Who seems of marble on a tomb?
How comes it here, this chamber bright,
Through whose mullion'd windows clear
The castle-court all wet with rain,
The drawbridge and the moat appear,
And then the beach, and, mark'd with spray,
The sunken reefs, and far away
The unquiet bright Atlantic plain?
— What, has some glamour made me sleep,
And sent me with my dogs to sweep,
By night, with boisterous bugle-peal,
Through some old, sea-side, knightly hall,
Not in the free green wood at all?
That Knight's asleep, and at her prayer
That Lady by the bed doth kneel —
Then hush, thou boisterous bugle-peal!"
— The wild boar rustles in his lair;
The fierce hounds snuff the tainted air;
But lord and hounds keep rooted there.

Cheer, cheer thy dogs into the brake,
O Hunter! and without a fear
Thy golden-tassell'd bugle blow,
And through the glades thy pastime take —
For thou wilt rouse no sleepers here!
For these thou seest are unmoved;
Cold, cold as those who lived and loved
A thousand years ago.°

III

ISEULT OF BRITTANY°

A YEAR had flown, and o'er the sea away,
In Cornwall, Tristram and Queen Iseult lay;
In King Marc's chapel, in Tyntagel old —
There in a ship they bore those lovers cold.

The young surviving Iseult, one bright day,
Had wander'd forth. Her children were at play
In a green circular hollow in the heath
Which borders the sea-shore — a country path
Creeps over it from the till'd fields behind.
The hollow's grassy banks are soft-inclined,
And to one standing on them, far and near
The lone unbroken view spreads bright and clear
Over the waste. This cirque° of open ground
Is light and green; the heather, which all round
Creeps thickly, grows not here; but the pale grass
Is strewn with rocks, and many a shiver'd mass
Of vein'd white-gleaming quartz, and here and there
Dotted with holly-trees and juniper.°
In the smooth centre of the opening stood
Three hollies side by side, and made a screen,
Warm with the winter-sun, of burnish'd green
With scarlet berries gemm'd, the fell-fare's° food.
Under the glittering hollies Iseult stands,
Watching her children play; their little hands
Are busy gathering spars of quartz, and streams
Of stagshorn° for their hats; anon, with screams

Of mad delight they drop their spoils, and bound
Among the holly-clumps and broken ground,
Racing full speed, and startling in their rush
The fell-fares and the speckled missel-thrush
Out of their glossy coverts; — but when now
Their cheeks were flush'd, and over each hot brow,
Under the feather'd hats of the sweet pair,
In blinding masses shower'd the golden hair —
Then Iseult call'd them to her, and the three
Cluster'd under the holly-screen, and she
Told them an old-world Breton history.°

Warm in their mantles wrapt the three stood there,
Under the hollies, in the clear still air —
Mantles with those rich furs deep glistering
Which Venice ships do from swart Egypt bring.
Long they stay'd still — then, pacing at their ease,
Moved up and down under the glossy trees.
But still, as they pursued their warm dry road,
From Iseult's lips the unbroken story flow'd,
And still the children listen'd, their blue eyes
Fix'd on their mother's face in wide surprise;
Nor did their looks stray once to the sea-side,
Nor to the brown heaths round them, bright and wide,
Nor to the snow, which, though 'twas all away
From the open heath, still by the hedgerows lay,
Nor to the shining sea-fowl, that with screams
Bore up from where the bright Atlantic gleams,
Swooping to landward; nor to where, quite clear,
The fell-fares settled on the thickets near.
And they would still have listen'd, till dark night
Came keen and chill down on the heather bright;
But, when the red glow on the sea grew cold,

And the grey turrets of the castle old
Look'd sternly through the frosty evening-air,
Then Iseult took by the hand those children fair,
And brought her tale to an end, and found the path,
And led them home over the darkening heath.

And is she happy? Does she see unmoved
The days in which she might have lived and loved
Slip without bringing bliss slowly away,
One after one, to-morrow like to-day?
Joy has not found her yet, nor ever will —
Is it this thought which makes her mien so still,
Her features so fatigued, her eyes, though sweet,
So sunk, so rarely lifted save to meet
Her children's? She moves slow; her voice alone
Hath yet an infantine and silver tone,
But even that comes languidly; in truth,
She seems one dying in a mask of youth.
And now she will go home, and softly lay
Her laughing children in their beds, and play
Awhile with them before they sleep; and then
She'll light her silver lamp, which fishermen
Dragging their nets through the rough waves, afar,
Along this iron coast,° know like a star,°
And take her broidery-frame, and there she'll sit
Hour after hour, her gold curls sweeping it;
Lifting her soft-bent head only to mind
Her children, or to listen to the wind.
And when the clock peals midnight, she will move
Her work away, and let her fingers rove
Across the shaggy brows of Tristram's hound
Who lies, guarding her feet, along the ground;
Or else she will fall musing, her blue eyes

Fixt, her slight hands clasp'd on her lap; then rise,
And at her prie-dieu° kneel, until she have told
Her rosary-beads of ebony tipp'd with gold,
Then to her soft sleep — and to-morrow'll be
To-day's exact repeated effigy.

Yes, it is lonely for her in her hall.
The children, and the grey-hair'd seneschal,°
Her women, and Sir Tristram's aged hound,
Are there the sole companions to be found.
But these she loves; and noiser life than this
She would find ill to bear, weak as she is.
She has her children, too, and night and day
Is with them; and the wide heaths where they play,
The hollies, and the cliff, and the sea-shore,
The sand, the sea-birds, and the distant sails,
These are to her dear as to them; the tales
With which this day the children she beguiled
She gleaned from Breton grandames, when a child,
In every hut along this sea-coast wild.
She herself loves them still, and, when they are told,
Can forget all to hear them, as of old.

Dear saints, it is not sorrow, as I hear,
Not suffering, which shuts up eye and ear
To all that has delighted them before,
And lets us be what we were once no more.
No, we may suffer deeply, yet retain
Power to be moved and soothed, for all our pain,
By what of old pleased us, and will again.
No, 'tis the gradual furnace of the world,
In whose hot air our spirits are upcurl'd
Until they crumble, or else grow like steel —

Which kills in us the bloom, the youth, the spring —
Which leaves the fierce necessity to feel,
But takes away the power — this can avail,
By drying up our joy in everything,
To make our former pleasures all seem stale.
This, or some tyrannous single thought, some fit
Of passion, which subdues our souls to it,
Till for its sake alone we live and move —
Call it ambition, or remorse, or love —
This too can change us wholly, and make seem
All which we did before, shadow and dream.

And yet, I swear, it angers me to see
How this fool passion gulls° men potently;
Being, in truth, but a diseased unrest,
And an unnatural overheat at best.
How they are full of languor and distress
Not having it; which when they do possess,
They straightway are burnt up with fume and care,
And spend their lives in posting here and there°
Where this plague drives them; and have little ease,
Are furious with themselves, and hard to please.
Like that bold Cæsar,° the famed Roman wight,
Who wept at reading of a Grecian knight
Who made a name at younger years than he;
Or that renown'd mirror of chivalry,
Prince Alexander,° Philip's peerless son,
Who carried the great war from Macedon
Into the Soudan's° realm, and thundered on
To die at thirty-five in Babylon.

What tale did Iseult to the children say,
Under the hollies, that bright winter's day?

She told them of the fairy-haunted land
Away the other side of Brittany,
Beyond the heaths, edged by the lonely sea;
Of the deep forest-glades of Broce-liande,°
Through whose green boughs the golden sunshine creeps,
Where Merlin by the enchanted thorn-tree sleeps.
For here he came with the fay° Vivian,
One April, when the warm days first began.
He was on foot, and that false fay, his friend,
On her white palfrey; here he met his end,
In these lone sylvan glades, that April-day.
This tale of Merlin and the lovely fay°
Was the one Iseult chose, and she brought clear
Before the children's fancy him and her.

Blowing between the stems, the forest-air
Had loosen'd the brown locks of Vivian's hair,
Which play'd on her flush'd cheek, and her blue eyes
Sparkled with mocking glee and exercise.
Her palfrey's flanks were mired and bathed in sweat,
For they had travell'd far and not stopp'd yet.
A brier in that tangled wilderness
Had scored her white right hand, which she allows
To rest ungloved on her green riding-dress;
The other warded off the drooping boughs.
But still she chatted on, with her blue eyes
Fix'd full on Merlin's face, her stately prize.
Her 'haviour had the morning's fresh clear grace,
The spirit of the woods was in her face.
She look'd so witching fair, that learned wight
Forgot his craft, and his best wits took flight;
And he grew fond, and eager to obey
His mistress, use her empire° as she may.

They came to where the brushwood ceased, and day
Peer'd 'twixt the stems; and the ground broke away,
In a sloped sward down to a brawling brook;
And up as high as where they stood to look
On the brook's farther side was clear, but then
The underwood and trees began again.
This open glen was studded thick with thorns
Then white with blossom; and you saw the horns,
Through last year's fern, of the shy fallow-deer
Who come at noon down to the water here.
You saw the bright-eyed squirrels dart along
Under the thorns on the green sward; and strong
The blackbird whistled from the dingles near,
And the weird chipping of the woodpecker
Rang lonelily and sharp; the sky was fair,
And a fresh breath of spring stirr'd everywhere.
Merlin and Vivian stopp'd on the slope's brow,
To gaze on the light sea of leaf and bough
Which glistering plays all round them, lone and mild.
As if to itself the quiet forest smiled.
Upon the brow-top grew a thorn, and here
The grass was dry and moss'd, and you saw clear
Across the hollow; white anemones
Starr'd the cool turf, and clumps of primroses
Ran out from the dark underwood behind.
No fairer resting-place a man could find.
"Here let us halt," said Merlin then; and she
Nodded, and tied her palfrey to a tree.

They sate them down together, and a sleep
Fell upon Merlin, more like death, so deep.
Her finger on her lips, then Vivian rose
And from her brown-lock'd head the wimple throws,

And takes it in her hand, and waves it over
The blossom'd thorn-tree and her sleeping lover.
Nine times she waved the fluttering wimple° round,
And made a little plot of magic ground.
And in that daised circle, as men say,
Is Merlin prisoner° till the judgment-day;
But she herself whither she will can rove —
For she was passing weary of his love.°

LYRICAL POEMS

THE CHURCH OF BROU°

I

THE CASTLE

Down the Savoy° valleys sounding,
  Echoing round this castle old,
'Mid the distant mountain-chalets°
  Hark! what bell for church is toll'd?

In the bright October morning
  Savoy's Duke had left his bride.
From the castle, past the drawbridge,
  Flow'd the hunters' merry tide.

Steeds are neighing, gallants glittering;
  Gay, her smiling lord to greet,
From her mullion'd chamber-casement
  Smiles the Duchess Marguerite.

From Vienna, by the Danube,
  Here she came, a bride, in spring.
Now the autumn crisps the forest;
  Hunters gather, bugles ring.

Hounds are pulling, prickers° swearing,
Horses fret, and boar-spears glance.
Off! — They sweep the marshy forests,
Westward, on the side of France.

Hark! the game's on foot; they scatter! —
Down the forest-ridings lone,
Furious, single horsemen gallop ——
Hark! a shout — a crash — a groan!

Pale and breathless, came the hunters;
On the turf dead lies the boar —
God! the Duke lies stretch'd beside him,
Senseless, weltering in his gore.

* * * * *

In the dull October evening,
Down the leaf-strewn forest-road,
To the castle, past the drawbridge,
Came the hunters with their load.

In the hall, with sconces blazing,
Ladies waiting round her seat,
Clothed in smiles, beneath the dais°
Sate the Duchess Marguerite.

Hark! below the gates unbarring!
Tramp of men and quick commands!
"— 'Tis my lord come back from hunting —"
And the Duchess claps her hands.

Slow and tired, came the hunters —
Stopp'd in darkness in the court.
"— Ho, this way, ye laggard hunters!
To the hall! What sport? What sport?" —

Slow they enter'd with their master;
In the hall they laid him down.
On his coat were leaves and blood-stains,
On his brow an angry frown.

Dead her princely youthful husband
Lay before his youthful wife,
Bloody, 'neath the flaring sconces —
And the sight froze all her life.

* * * *

In Vienna, by the Danube,
Kings hold revel, gallants meet.
Gay of old amid the gayest
Was the Duchess Marguerite.

In Vienna, by the Danube,
Feast and dance her youth beguiled.
Till that hour she never sorrow'd;
But from then she never smiled.

'Mid the Savoy mountain valleys
Far from town or haunt of man,
Stands a lonely church, unfinish'd,
Which the Duchess Maud began;

Old, that Duchess stern began it,
In grey age, with palsied hands;
But she died while it was building,
And the Church unfinish'd stands —

Stands as erst° the builders left it,
When she sank into her grave;
Mountain greensward paves the chancel,°
Harebells flower in the nave.°

"— In my castle all is sorrow,"
Said the Duchess Marguerite then;
"Guide me, some one, to the mountain!
We will build the Church again." —

Sandall'd palmers,° faring homeward,
Austrian knights from Syria came.
"— Austrian wanderers bring, O warders!
Homage to your Austrian dame." —

From the gate the warders answer'd:
"— Gone, O knights, is she you knew!
Dead our Duke, and gone his Duchess;
Seek her at the Church of Brou!" —

Austrian knights and march-worn palmers
Climb the winding mountain-way —
Reach the valley, where the Fabric
Rises higher day by day.

Stones are sawing, hammers ringing;
On the work the bright sun shines,
In the Savoy mountain-meadows,
By the stream, below the pines.

On her palfry white the Duchess
Sate and watch'd her working train —
Flemish carvers, Lombard gilders,
German masons, smiths from Spain.

Clad in black, on her white palfrey,
Her old architect beside —

There they found her in the mountains,
  Morn and noon and eventide.

There she sate, and watch'd the builders,
  Till the Church was roof'd and done.
Last of all, the builders rear'd her
  In the nave a tomb of stone.

On the tomb two forms they sculptured,
  Lifelike in the marble pale—
One, the Duke in helm and armour;
  One, the Duchess in her veil.

Round the tomb the carved stone fretwork°
  Was at Easter-tide put on.
Then the Duchess closed her labours;
  And she died at the St. John.

II

THE CHURCH

Upon the glistening leaden roof
Of the new Pile, the sunlight shines;
    The stream goes leaping by.
The hills are clothed with pines sun-proof;
'Mid bright green fields, below the pines,
    Stands the Church on high.
What Church is this, from men aloof?—
'Tis the Church of Brou.

At sunrise, from their dewy lair
Crossing the stream, the kine are seen
    Round the wall to stray—

The churchyard wall that clips the square
Of open hill-sward fresh and green
Where last year they lay.
But all things now are order'd fair
Round the Church of Brou.

On Sundays, at the matin-chime,°
The Alpine peasants, two and three,
Climb up here to pray;
Burghers and dames, at summer's prime,
Ride out to church from Chambery,°
Dight° with mantles gay.
But else it is a lonely time
Round the Church of Brou.

On Sundays, too, a priest doth come
From the wall'd town beyond the pass,
Down the mountain-way;
And then you hear the organ's hum,
You hear the white-robed priest say mass,
And the people pray.
But else the woods and fields are dumb
Round the Church of Brou.

And after church, when mass is done,
The people to the nave repair
Round the tomb to stray;
And marvel at the Forms of stone,
And praise the chisell'd broideries° rare —
Then they drop away.
The princely Pair are left alone
In the Church of Brou.

III

THE TOMB

So rest, for ever rest, O princely Pair!
In your high church, 'mid the still mountain-air,
Where horn, and hound, and vassals, never come.
Only the blessed Saints are smiling dumb,
From the rich painted windows of the nave,
On aisle, and transept,° and your marble grave;
Where thou, young Prince! shalt never more arise
From the fringed mattress where thy Duchess lies,
On autumn-mornings, when the bugle sounds,
And ride across the drawbridge with thy hounds
To hunt the boar in the crisp woods till eve;
And thou, O Princess! shalt no more receive,
Thou and thy ladies, in the hall of state,
The jaded hunters with their bloody freight,
Coming benighted to the castle-gate.
  So sleep, for ever sleep, O marble Pair!
Or, if ye wake, let it be then, when fair
On the carved western front a flood of light
Streams from the setting sun, and colours bright
Prophets, transfigured Saints, and Martyrs brave,
In the vast western window of the nave;
And on the pavement round the Tomb there glints
A chequer-work of glowing sapphire-tints,
And amethyst, and ruby — then unclose
Your eyelids on the stone where ye repose,
And from your broider'd pillows lift your heads,
And rise upon your cold white marble beds;

And, looking down on the warm rosy tints,
Which chequer, at your feet, the illumined flints,
Say: *What is this? we are in bliss — forgiven —*
Behold the pavement of the courts of Heaven!
Or let it be on autumn nights, when rain
Doth rustlingly above your heads complain
On the smooth leaden roof, and on the walls
Shedding her pensive light at intervals
The moon through the clere-story windows shines,
And the wind washes through the mountain-pines.
Then, gazing up 'mid the dim pillars high,
The foliaged marble forest° where ye lie,
Hush, ye will say, *it is eternity!*
This is the glimmering verge of Heaven, and these
The columns of the heavenly palaces!
And, in the sweeping of the wind, your ear
The passage of the Angels' wings will hear,
And on the lichen-crusted leads° above
The rustle of the eternal rain of love.

REQUIESCAT°

Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew!
In quiet she reposes;
Ah, would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound.
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabin'd,° ample spirit,
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty° hall of death.

CONSOLATION

Mist clogs the sunshine.
Smoky dwarf houses
Hem me round everywhere;
A vague dejection
Weighs down my soul.

Yet, while I languish,
Everywhere countless
Prospects unroll themselves,
And countless beings
Pass countless moods.

Far hence, in Asia,
On the smooth convent-roofs,
On the gilt terraces,
Of holy Lassa,°
Bright shines the sun.

Grey time-worn marbles
Hold the pure Muses°;
In their cool gallery,°
By yellow Tiber,°
They still look fair.

Strange unloved uproar°
Shrills round their portal;
Yet not on Helicon°
Kept they more cloudless
Their noble calm.

Through sun-proof alleys
In a lone, sand-hemm'd
City of Africa,
A blind, led beggar,
Age-bow'd, asks alms.

No bolder robber
Erst° abode ambush'd
Deep in the sandy waste;
No clearer eyesight
Spied prey afar.

Saharan sand-winds
Sear'd his keen eyeballs;
Spent is the spoil he won.
For him the present
Holds only pain.

Two young, fair lovers,
Where the warm June-wind,

Fresh from the summer fields
Plays fondly round them,
Stand, tranced in joy.

With sweet, join'd voices,
And with eyes brimming:
"Ah," they cry, "Destiny,°
Prolong the present!
Time, stand still here!"

The prompt stern Goddess
Shakes her head, frowning;
Time gives his hour-glass
Its due reversal;
Their hour is gone.

With weak indulgence
Did the just Goddess
Lengthen their happiness,
She lengthen'd also
Distress elsewhere.

The hour, whose happy
Unalloy'd moments
I would eternalise,
Ten thousand mourners
Well pleased see end.

The bleak, stern hour,
Whose severe moments
I would annihilate,
Is pass'd by others
In warmth, light, joy.

Time, so complain'd of,
Who to no one man
Shows partiality,
Brings round to all men
Some undimm'd hours.

A DREAM

Was it a dream? We sail'd, I thought we sail'd,
Martin and I, down the green Alpine stream,
Border'd, each bank, with pines; the morning sun,
On the wet umbrage of their glossy tops,
On the red pinings of their forest-floor,
Drew a warm scent abroad; behind the pines
The mountain-skirts, with all their sylvan change
Of bright-leaf'd chestnuts and moss'd walnut-trees
And the frail scarlet-berried ash, began.
Swiss chalets glitter'd on the dewy slopes,
And from some swarded shelf, high up, there came
Notes of wild pastoral music — over all
Ranged, diamond-bright, the eternal wall of snow.
Upon the mossy rocks at the stream's edge,
Back'd by the pines, a plank-built cottage stood,
Bright in the sun; the climbing gourd-plant's leaves
Muffled its walls, and on the stone-strewn roof
Lay the warm golden gourds; golden, within,
Under the eaves, peer'd rows of Indian corn.
We shot beneath the cottage with the stream.
On the brown, rude-carved balcony, two forms
Came forth — Olivia's, Marguerite! and thine.

Clad were they both in white, flowers in their breast;
Straw hats bedeck'd their heads, with ribbons blue,
Which danced, and on their shoulders, fluttering, play'd.
They saw us, they conferr'd; their bosoms heaved,
And more than mortal impulse fill'd their eyes.
Their lips moved; their white arms, waved eagerly,
Flash'd once, like falling streams; we rose, we gazed.
One moment, on the rapid's top, our boat
Hung poised — and then the darting river of Life
(Such now, methought, it was), the river of Life,
Loud thundering, bore us by; swift, swift it foam'd,
Black under cliffs it raced, round headlands shone.
Soon the plank'd cottage by the sun-warm'd pines
Faded — the moss — the rocks; us burning plains,
Bristled with cities, us the sea received.

LINES°

WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

In this lone, open glade I lie,
Screen'd by deep boughs on either hand;
And at its end, to stay the eye,
Those black-crown'd, red-boled pine-trees° stand!

Birds here make song, each bird has his,
Across the girdling city's hum.
How green under the boughs it is!
How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come!

Sometimes a child will cross the glade
To take his nurse his broken toy;
Sometimes a thrush flit overhead
Deep in her unknown day's employ.

Here at my feet what wonders pass,
What endless, active life is here°!
What blowing daisies, fragrant grass!
An air-stirr'd forest, fresh and clear.

Scarce fresher is the mountain-sod
Where the tired angler lies, stretch'd out,
And, eased of basket and of rod,
Counts his day's spoil, the spotted trout.

In the huge world,° which roars hard by,
Be others happy if they can!
But in my helpless cradle I
Was breathed on by the rural Pan.°

I, on men's impious uproar hurl'd,
Think often, as I hear them rave,
That peace has left the upper world
And now keeps only in the grave.

Yet here is peace for ever new!
When I who watch them am away,
Still all things in this glade go through
The changes of their quiet day.

Then to their happy rest they pass!
The flowers upclose, the birds are fed,
The night comes down upon the grass,
The child sleeps warmly in his bed.

Calm soul of all things! make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of thine,
Man did not make, and cannot mar.

The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others give°!
Calm, calm me more! nor let me die
Before I have begun to live.

THE STRAYED REVELLER°

The Portico of Circe's Palace. Evening.

A YOUTH. CIRCE.°

The Youth. Faster, faster,
O Circe, Goddess,
Let the wild, thronging train,
The bright procession
Of eddying forms,
Sweep through my soul!

Thou standest, smiling
Down on me! thy right arm,
Lean'd up against the column there,
Props thy soft cheek;
Thy left holds, hanging loosely,
The deep cup, ivy-cinctured,°
I held but now.

Is it, then, evening
So soon? I see, the night-dews,
Cluster'd in thick beads, dim
The agate brooch-stones
On thy white shoulder;
The cool night-wind, too,
Blows through the portico,
Stirs thy hair, Goddess,
Waves thy white robe!

Circe. Whence art thou, sleeper?

The Youth. When the white dawn first
Through the rough fir-planks
Of my hut, by the chestnuts,
Up at the valley-head,
Came breaking, Goddess!
I sprang up, I threw round me
My dappled fawn-skin;
Passing out, from the wet turf,
Where they lay, by the hut door,
I snatch'd up my vine-crown, my fir-staff,
All drench'd in dew —
Came swift down to join
The rout° early gather'd
In the town, round the temple,
Iacchus'° white fane°
On yonder hill.

Quick I pass'd, following
The wood-cutters' cart-track
Down the dark valley; — I saw
On my left, through the beeches,

Thy palace, Goddess,
Smokeless, empty!
Trembling, I enter'd; beheld
The court all silent,
The lions sleeping,°
On the altar this bowl.
I drank, Goddess!
And sank down here, sleeping,
On the steps of thy portico.

Circe. Foolish boy! Why tremblest thou?
Thou lovest it, then, my wine?
Wouldst more of it? See, how glows,
Through the delicate, flush'd marble,
The red, creaming liquor,
Strown with dark seeds!
Drink, then! I chide thee not,
Deny thee not my bowl.
Come, stretch forth thy hand, then — so!
Drink — drink again!

The Youth. Thanks, gracious one!
Ah, the sweet fumes again!
More soft, ah me,
More subtle-winding
Than Pan's flute-music!°
Faint — faint! Ah me,
Again the sweet sleep!

Circe. Hist! Thou— within there!
Come forth, Ulysses°!
Art° tired with hunting?
While we range° the woodland,
See what the day brings.°

Ulysses. Ever new magic!
Hast thou then lured hither,
Wonderful Goddess, by thy art,
The young, languid-eyed Ampelus,
Iacchus' darling —
Or some youth beloved of Pan,
Of Pan and the Nymphs°?
That he sits, bending downward
His white, delicate neck
To the ivy-wreathed marge
Of thy cup; the bright, glancing vine-leaves
That crown his hair,
Falling forward, mingling
With the dark ivy-plants —
His fawn-skin, half untied,
Smear'd with red wine-stains? Who is he,
That he sits, overweigh'd
By fumes of wine and sleep,
So late, in thy portico?
What youth, Goddess, — what guest
Of Gods or mortals?

Circe. Hist! he wakes!
I lured him not hither, Ulysses.
Nay, ask him!

The Youth. Who speaks? Ah, who comes forth
To thy side, Goddess, from within?
How shall I name him?
This spare, dark-featured,
Quick-eyed stranger?
Ah, and I see too
His sailor's bonnet,

His short coat, travel-tarnish'd,
With one arm bare° ! —
Art thou not he, whom fame
This long time rumours
The favour'd guest of Circe,° brought by the waves ?
Art thou he, stranger ?
The wise Ulysses,
Laertes' son ?

Ulysses. I am Ulysses.
And thou, too, sleeper ?
Thy voice is sweet.
It may be thou hast follow'd
Through the islands some divine bard,
By age taught many things,
Age and the Muses° ;
And heard him delighting
The chiefs and people
In the banquet, and learn'd his songs,
Of Gods and Heroes,
Of war and arts,
And peopled cities,
Inland, or built
By the grey sea. — If so, then hail !
I honour and welcome thee.

The Youth. The Gods are happy.
They turn on all sides
Their shining eyes,
And see below them
The earth and men.°

They see Tiresias°
Sitting, staff in hand,

On the warm, grassy
Asopus° bank,
His robe drawn over
His old, sightless head,
Revolving inly
The doom of Thebes.°

They see the Centaurs°
In the upper glens
Of Pelion,° in the streams,
Where red-berried ashes fringe
The clear-brown shallow pools,
With streaming flanks, and heads
Rear'd proudly, snuffing
The mountain wind.

They see the Indian
Drifting, knife in hand,
His frail boat moor'd to
A floating isle thick-matted
With large-leaved, low-creeping melon-plants,
And the dark cucumber.
He reaps, and stows them,
Drifting — drifting; — round him,
Round his green harvest-plot,
Flow the cool lake-waves,
The mountains ring them.°

They see the Scythian
On the wide stepp, unharnessing
His wheel'd house at noon.
He tethers his beast down, and makes his meal —
Mares' milk, and bread

Baked on the embers° ; — all around
The boundless, waving grass-plains stretch, thick-starr'd
With saffron and the yellow hollyhock
And flag-leaved iris-flowers.
Sitting in his cart
He makes his meal; before him, for long miles,
Alive with bright green lizards,
And the springing bustard-fowl,
The track, a straight black line,
Furrows the rich soil ; here and there
Clusters of lonely mounds
Topp'd with rough-hewn,
Grey, rain-blear'd statues, overpeer
The sunny waste.°

They see the ferry
On the broad, clay-laden
Lone Chorasmian stream° ; — thereon,
With snort and strain,
Two horses, strongly swimming, tow
The ferry-boat, with woven ropes
To either bow
Firm harness'd by the mane ; a chief,
With shout and shaken spear,
Stands at the prow, and guides them ; but astern
The cowering merchants, in long robes,
Sit pale beside their wealth
Of silk-bales and of balsam-drops,
Of gold and ivory,
Of turquoise-earth and amethyst,
Jasper and chalcedony,
And milk-barr'd onyx-stones.°

The loaded boat swings groaning
In the yellow eddies;
The Gods behold them.
They see the Heroes
Sitting in the dark ship
On the foamless, long-heaving
Violet sea,
At sunset nearing
The Happy Islands.°

These things, Ulysses,
The wise bards also
Behold and sing.
But oh, what labour!
O prince, what pain!

They too can see
Tiresias;—but the Gods,
Who give them vision,
Added this law:
That they should bear too
His groping blindness,
His dark foreboding,
His scorn'd white hairs;
Bear Hera's anger°
Through a life lengthen'd
To seven ages.

They see the Centaurs
On Pelion;—then they feel,
They too, the maddening wine
Swell their large veins to bursting; in wild pain
They feel the biting spears

Of the grim Lapithæ,° and Theseus,° drive,
Drive crashing through their bones°; they feel
High on a jutting rock in the red stream
Alcmena's dreadful son°
Ply his bow; — such a price
The Gods exact for song:
To become what we sing.

They see the Indian
On his mountain lake; but squalls
Make their skiff reel, and worms
In the unkind spring have gnawn
Their melon-harvest to the heart. — They see
The Scythian; but long frosts
Parch them in winter-time on the bare stepp,
Till they too fade like grass; they crawl
Like shadows forth in spring.

They see the merchants
On the Oxus stream°; — but care
Must visit first them too, and make them pale.
Whether, through whirling sand,
A cloud of desert robber-horse have burst
Upon their caravan; or greedy kings,
In the wall'd cities the way passes through,
Crush'd them with tolls; or fever-airs,
On some great river's marge,
Mown them down, far from home.

They see the Heroes°
Near harbour; — but they share
Their lives, and former violent toil in Thebes,
Seven-gated Thebes, or Troy°;

Or where the echoing oars
Of Argo first
Startled the unknown sea.°

The old Silenus°
Came, lolling in the sunshine,
From the dewy forest-coverts,
This way, at noon.
Sitting by me, while his Fauns
Down at the water-side
Sprinkled and smoothed
His drooping garland,
He told me these things.

But I, Ulysses,
Sitting on the warm steps,
Looking over the valley,
All day long, have seen,
Without pain, without labour,
Sometimes a wild-hair'd Mænad° —
Sometimes a Faun with torches° —
And sometimes, for a moment,
Passing through the dark stems
Flowing-robed, the beloved,
The desired, the divine,
Beloved Iacchus.

Ah, cool night-wind, tremulous stars!
Ah, glimmering water,
Fitful earth-murmur,
Dreaming woods!
Ah, golden-hair'd, strangely smiling Goddess,
And thou, proved, much enduring,

Wave-toss'd Wanderer!
Who can stand still?
Ye fade, ye swim, ye waver before me —
The cup again!

Faster, faster,
O Circe, Goddess,
Let the wild, thronging train,
The bright procession
Of eddying forms,
Sweep through my soul!

MORALITY

We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight will'd
Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.
Not till the hours of light return,
All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,

Ask, how *she* view'd thy self-control,
Thy struggling, task'd morality —
  Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
  Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,
See, on her face a glow is spread,
A strong emotion on her cheek!
  "Ah, child!" she cries, "that strife divine,
  Whence was it, for it is not mine?

"There is no effort on *my* brow —
I do not strive, I do not weep;
I rush with the swift spheres and glow
In joy, and when I will, I sleep.
  Yet that severe, that earnest air,
  I saw, I felt it once — but where?

"I knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space;
I felt it in some other clime,
I saw it in some other place.
  'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
  And lay upon the breast of God."

DOVER BEACH

The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair

Upon the straits; — on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles° long ago
Heard it on the Ægæan,° and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.
Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,

Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

PHILOMELA°

Hark! ah, the nightingale —
The tawny-throated!
Hark, from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark! — what pain°!

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,°
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewilder'd brain
That wild, unquench'd, deep-sunken, old-world pain° —
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy rack'd heart and brain
Afford no balm?

Dost thou to-night behold,
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild°?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and sear'd eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame°?
Dost thou once more assay

Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis,° and the high Cephissian vale°?
Listen, Eugenia —
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves°!
Again — thou hearest?
Eternal passion!
Eternal pain°!

HUMAN LIFE

What mortal, when he saw,
Life's voyage done, his heavenly Friend,
Could ever yet dare tell him fearlessly:
"I have kept uninfringed my nature's law°;
The inly-written chart° thou gavest me,
To guide me, I have steer'd by to the end"?

Ah! let us make no claim,
On life's incognisable° sea,
To too exact a steering of our way;
Let us not fret and fear to miss our aim,
If some fair coast have lured us to make stay,
Or some friend hail'd us to keep company.

Ay! we would each fain drive
At random, and not steer by rule.
Weakness! and worse, weakness bestow'd in vain
Winds from our side the unsuiting consort rive,
We rush by coasts where we had lief remain;
Man cannot, though he would, live chance's fool.

No! as the foaming swath
Of torn-up water, on the main,
Falls heavily away with long-drawn roar
On either side the black deep-furrow'd path
Cut by an onward-labouring vessel's prore,°
And never touches the ship-side again;

Even so we leave behind,
As, charter'd by some unknown Powers,
We stem° across the sea of life by night,
The joys which were not for our use design'd; —
The friends to whom we had no natural right,
The homes that were not destined to be ours.

ISOLATION

To Marguerite

Yes°! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone.*
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon° their hollows lights,
And they are swept by balms of spring,
And in their glens, on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing;
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
Across the sounds and channels pour —

Oh! then a longing like despair
Is to their farthest caverns sent;
For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent!
Now round us spreads the watery plain —
Oh might our marges meet again!

Who order'd, that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cool'd?
Who renders vain their deep desire? —
A God, a God their severance ruled!
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea.°

KAISER DEAD°

April 6, 1887

WHAT, Kaiser dead? The heavy news
Post-haste to Cobham° calls the Muse,
From where in Farringford° she brews
The ode sublime,
Or with Pen-bryn's bold bard° pursues
A rival rhyme.

Kai's bracelet tail, Kai's busy feet,
Were known to all the village-street.
"What, poor Kai dead?" say all I meet;
"A loss indeed!"
O for the croon pathetic, sweet,
Of Robin's reed°!

Six years ago I brought him down,
A baby dog, from London town;
Round his small throat of black and brown
A ribbon blue,
And vouch'd by glorious renown
A dachshound true.

His mother, most majestic dame,
Of blood-unmix'd, from Potsdam° came;
And Kaiser's race we deem'd the same—
No lineage higher.
And so he bore the imperial name.
But ah, his sire!

Soon, soon the days conviction bring.
The collie hair, the collie swing,
The tail's indomitable ring,
The eye's unrest—
The case was clear; a mongrel thing
Kai stood confest.

But all those virtues, which commend
The humbler sort who serve and tend,
Were thine in store, thou faithful friend.
What sense, what cheer!
To us, declining tow'rds our end,
A mate how dear!

For Max, thy brother-dog, began
To flag, and feel his narrowing span.
And cold, besides, his blue blood ran,
Since, 'gainst the classes,
He heard, of late, the Grand Old Man°
Incite the masses.

Yes, Max and we grew slow and sad;
But Kai, a tireless shepherd-lad,
Teeming with plans, alert, and glad
In work or play,
Like sunshine went and came, and bade
Live out the day!

Still, still I see the figure smart —
Trophy in mouth, agog° to start,
Then, home return'd, once more depart;
Or prest together
Against thy mistress, loving heart,
In winter weather.

I seē the tail, like bracelet twirl'd,
In moments of disgrace uncurl'd,
Then at a pardoning word re-furl'd,
A conquering sign;
Crying, "Come on, and range the world,
And never pine."

Thine eye was bright, thy coat it shone;
Thou hast thine errands, off and on;
In joy thy last morn flew; anon,
A fit! All's over;
And thou art gone where Geist° hath gone,
And Toss, and Rover.

Poor Max, with downcast, reverent head,
Regards his brother's form outspread;
Full well Max knows the friend is dead
Whose cordial talk,
And jokes in doggish language said,
Beguiled his walk.

And Glory, stretch'd at Burwood gate,
Thy passing by doth vainly wait;
And jealous Jock, thy only hate,
The chiel° from Skye,°
Lets from his shaggy Highland pate
Thy memory die.

Well, fetch his graven collar fine,
And rub the steel, and make it shine,
And leave it round thy neck to twine,
Kai, in thy grave.
There of thy master keep that sign,
And this plain stave.

THE LAST WORD°

Creep into thy narrow bed,
Creep, and let no more be said!
Vain thy onset! all stands fast.
Thou thyself must break at last.

Let the long contention cease!
Geese are swans, and swans are geese.
Let them have it how they will!
Thou art tired; best be still.

They out-talk'd thee, hiss'd thee, tore thee?
Better men fared thus before thee;
Fired their ringing shot and pass'd,
Hotly charged — and sank at last.

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall!

PALLADIUM°

SET where the upper streams of Simois° flow
Was the Palladium, high 'mid rock and wood;
And Hector° was in Ilium,° far below,
And fought, and saw it not — but there it stood!

It stood, and sun and moonshine rain'd their light
On the pure columns of its glen-built hall.
Backward and forward roll'd the waves of fight
Round Troy — but while this stood, Troy could not fall.

So, in its lovely moonlight, lives the soul.
Mountains surround it, and sweet virgin air;
Cold plashing, past it, crystal waters roll;
We visit it by moments, ah, too rare!

We shall renew the battle in the plain
To-morrow; — red with blood will Xanthus° be;
Hector and Ajax° will be there again,
Helen° will come upon the wall to see.

Then we shall rust in shade, or shine in strife,
And fluctuate 'twixt blind hopes and blind despairs,
And fancy that we put forth all our life,
And never know how with the soul it fares.

Still doth the soul, from its lone fastness high,
Upon our life a ruling effluence send.
And when it fails, fight as we will, we die;
And while it lasts, we cannot wholly end.

REVOLUTIONS

Before man parted for this earthly strand,
While yet upon the verge of heaven he stood,
God put a heap of letters in his hand,
And bade him make with them what word he could.

And man has turn'd them many times; made Greece,
Rome, England, France; — yes, nor in vain essay'd
Way after way, changes that never cease!
The letters have combined, something was made.

But ah! an inextinguishable sense
Haunts him that he has not made what he should;
That he has still, though old, to recommence,
Since he has not yet found the word God would.

And empire after empire, at their height
Of sway, have felt this boding sense come on;
Have felt their huge frames not constructed right,
And droop'd, and slowly died upon their throne.

One day, thou say'st, there will at last appear
The word, the order, which God meant should be.
— Ah! we shall know *that* well when it comes near;
The band will quit man's heart, he will breathe free.

SELF–DEPENDENCE°

Weary of myself, and sick of asking
What I am, and what I ought to be,
At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire
O'er the sea and to the stars I send:
"Ye who from my childhood up have calm'd me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

"Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye waters,
On my heart your mighty charm renew;
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
Feel my soul becoming vast like you!"

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer:
"Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

"And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silver'd roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see."

O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear:
"Resolve to be thyself; and know that he,
Who finds himself, loses his misery!"

A SUMMER NIGHT

In the deserted, moon-blanch'd street,
How lonely rings the echo of my feet!
Those windows, which I gaze at, frown,
Silent and white, unopening down,
Repellent as the world; — but see,
A break between the housetops shows
The moon! and, lost behind her, fading dim
Into the dewy dark obscurity
Down at the far horizon's rim,
Doth a whole tract of heaven disclose!

And to my mind the thought
Is on a sudden brought
Of a past night, and a far different scene.
Headlands stood out into the moonlit deep
As clearly as at noon;
The spring-tide's brimming flow
Heaved dazzlingly between;
Houses, with long white sweep,

Girdled the glistening bay;
Behind, through the soft air,
The blue haze-cradled mountains spread away,
The night was far more fair —
But the same restless pacings to and fro,
And the same vainly throbbing heart was there,
And the same bright, calm moon.

And the calm moonlight seems to say:
Hast thou then still the old unquiet breast,
Which neither deadens into rest,
Nor ever feels the fiery glow
That whirls the spirit from itself away,
But fluctuates to and fro,
Never by passion quite possess'd
And never quite benumb'd by the world's sway? —
And I, I know not if to pray
Still to be what I am, or yield and be
Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,
Where, in the sun's hot eye,
With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly
Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give,
Dreaming of nought beyond their prison-wall.
And as, year after year,
Fresh products of their barren labour fall
From their tired hands, and rest
Never yet comes more near,
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast;
A while they try to stem
The waves of mournful thought by which they are prest,

And the rest, a few,
Escape their prison and depart
On the wide ocean of life anew.
There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart
Listeth, will sail;
Nor doth he know how these prevail,
Despotic on that sea,
Trade-winds which cross it from eternity.
Awhile he holds some false way, undebarr'd
By thwarting signs, and braves
The freshening wind and blackening waves
And then the tempest strikes him; and between
The lightning-bursts is seen
Only a driving wreck.
And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck
With anguished face and flying hair,
Grasping the rudder hard,
Still bent to make some port he knows not where,
Still standing for some false, impossible shore.
And sterner comes the roar
Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom
And he, too, disappears and comes no more.

Is there no life, but there alone?
Madman or slave, must man be one?
Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain!
Clearness divine.
Ye heavens, whose pure dark regions have no sign
Of languor, though so calm, and though so great
Are yet untroubled and unpassionate;
Who though so noble, share in the world's toil.
And, though so task'd, keep free from dust and soil!

I will not say that your mild deeps retain
A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain
Who have longed deeply once, and longed in vain —
But I will rather say that you remain
A world above man's head, to let him see
How boundless might his soul's horizon be,
How vast, yet of which clear transparency!
How it were good to live there, and breathe free!
How fair a lot to fill
Is left to each man still!

GEIST'S GRAVE°

Four years! — and didst thou stay above
The ground, which hides thee now, but four?
And all that life, and all that love,
Were crowded, Geist! into no more?

Only four years those winning ways,
Which make me for thy presence yearn,
Call'd us to pet thee or to praise,
Dear little friend! at every turn?

That loving heart, that patient soul,
Had they indeed no longer span,
To run their course, and reach their goal,
And read their homily° to man?

That liquid, melancholy eye,
From whose pathetic, soul-fed springs

Seem'd surging the Virgilian cry,°
The sense of tears in mortal things —

That steadfast, mournful strain, consoled
By spirits gloriously gay,
And temper of heroic mould —
What, was four years their whole short day?

Yes, only four! — and not the course
Of all the centuries yet to come,
And not the infinite resource
Of Nature, with her countless sum

Of figures, with her fulness vast
Of new creation evermore,
Can ever quite repeat the past,
Or just thy little self restore.

Stern law of every mortal lot!
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,
And builds himself I know not what
Of second life I know not where.

But thou, when struck thine hour to go,
On us, who stood despondent by,
A meek last glance of love didst throw,
And humbly lay thee down to die.

Yet would we keep thee in our heart —
Would fix our favourite on the scene,
Nor let thee utterly depart
And be as if thou ne'er hadst been.

And so there rise these lines of verse
On lips that rarely form them now°;
While to each other we rehearse:
Such ways, such arts, such looks hadst thou!

We stroke thy broad brown paws again,
We bid thee to thy vacant chair,
We greet thee by the window-pane,
We hear thy scuffle on the stair.

We see the flaps of thy large ears
Quick raised to ask which way we go;
Crossing the frozen lake, appears
Thy small black figure on the snow!

Nor to us only art thou dear
Who mourn thee in thine English home;
Thou hast thine absent master's° tear,
Dropt by the far Australian foam.

Thy memory lasts both here and there,
And thou shalt live as long as we.
And after that — thou dost not care!
In us was all the world to thee.

Yet, fondly zealous for thy fame,
Even to a date beyond our own
We strive to carry down thy name,
By mounded turf, and graven stone.

We lay thee, close within our reach,
Here, where the grass is smooth and warm,
Between the holly and the beech,
Where oft we watch'd thy couchant form,

Asleep, yet lending half an ear
To travellers on the Portsmouth road; —
There build we thee, O guardian dear,
Mark'd with a stone, thy last abode!

Then some, who through this garden pass,
When we too, like thyself, are clay,
Shall see thy grave upon the grass,
And stop before the stone, and say:

People who lived here long ago
Did by this stone, it seems, intend
To name for future times to know
The dachs-hound, Geist, their little friend.

EPILOGUE

TO LESSING'S LAOCOÖN°

One morn as through Hyde Park° we walk'd,
My friend and I, by chance we talk'd
Of Lessing's famed Laocoön;
And after we awhile had gone
In Lessing's track, and tried to see
What painting is, what poetry —
Diverging to another thought,
"Ah," cries my friend, "but who hath taught
Why music and the other arts
Oftener perform aright their parts
Than poetry? why she, than they,
Fewer fine successes can display?

"For 'tis so, surely! Even in Greece,
Where best the poet framed his piece,
Even in that Phœbus-guarded ground°
Pausanias° on his travels found
Good poems, if he look'd, more rare
(Though many) than good statues were —
For these, in truth, were everywhere.
Of bards full many a stroke divine
In Dante's,° Petrarch's,° Tasso's° line,
The land of Ariosto° show'd;
And yet, e'en there, the canvas glow'd
With triumphs, a yet ampler brood,
Of Raphael° and his brotherhood.
And nobly perfect, in our day
Of haste, half-work, and disarray,
Profound yet touching, sweet yet strong,
Hath risen Goethe's,° Wordsworth's° song;
Yet even I (and none will bow
Deeper to these) must needs allow,
They yield us not, to soothe our pains,
Such multitude of heavenly strains
As from the kings of sound are blown,
Mozart,° Beethoven,° Mendelssohn.°"

While thus my friend discoursed, we pass
Out of the path, and take the grass.
The grass had still the green of May,
And still the unblacken'd elms were gay;
The kine were resting in the shade,
The flies a summer-murmur made.
Bright was the morn and south° the air;
The soft-couch'd cattle were as fair
As those which pastured by the sea,

That old-world morn, in Sicily,
When on the beach the Cyclops lay,
And Galatea from the bay
Mock'd her poor lovelorn giant's lay.°
"Behold," I said, "the painter's sphere!
The limits of his art appear.
The passing group, the summer-morn,
The grass, the elms, that blossom'd thorn —
Those cattle couch'd, or, as they rise,
Their shining flanks, their liquid eyes —
These, or much greater things, but caught
Like these, and in one aspect brought!
In outward semblance he must give
A moment's life of things that live;
Then let him choose his moment well,
With power divine its story tell."

Still we walk'd on, in thoughtful mood,
And now upon the bridge we stood.
Full of sweet breathings was the air,
Of sudden stirs and pauses fair.
Down o'er the stately bridge the breeze
Came rustling from the garden-trees
And on the sparkling waters play'd;
Light-plashing waves an answer made,
And mimic boats their haven near'd.
Beyond, the Abbey-towers° appear'd,
By mist and chimneys unconfined,
Free to the sweep of light and wind;
While through their earth-moor'd nave below
Another breath of wind doth blow,
Sound as of wandering breeze — but sound
In laws by human artists bound.

"The world of music°!" I exclaimed: —
"This breeze that rustles by, that famed
Abbey recall it! what a sphere
Large and profound, hath genius here!
The inspired musician what a range,
What power of passion, wealth of change
Some source of feeling he must choose
And its lock'd fount of beauty use,
And through the stream of music tell
Its else unutterable spell;
To choose it rightly is his part,
And press into its inmost heart.

"*Miserere Domine°!*
The words are utter'd, and they flee.
Deep is their penitential moan,
Mighty their pathos, but 'tis gone.
They have declared the spirit's sore
Sore load, and words can do no more.
Beethoven takes them then — those two
Poor, bounded words — and makes them new;
Infinite makes them, makes them young;
Transplants them to another tongue,
Where they can now, without constraint,
Pour all the soul of their complaint,
And roll adown a channel large
The wealth divine they have in charge.
Page after page of music turn,
And still they live and still they burn,
Eternal, passion-fraught, and free —
Miserere Domine°!"

Onward we moved, and reach'd the Ride°
Where gaily flows the human tide.

Afar, in rest the cattle lay;
We heard, afar, faint music play;
But agitated, brisk, and near,
Men, with their stream of life, were here.
Some hang upon the rails, and some
On foot behind them go and come.
This through the Ride upon his steed
Goes slowly by, and this at speed.
The young, the happy, and the fair,
The old, the sad, the worn, were there;
Some vacant,° and some musing went,
And some in talk and merriment.
Nods, smiles, and greetings, and farewells!
And now and then, perhaps, there swells
A sigh, a tear — but in the throng
All changes fast, and hies° along.
Hies, ah, from whence, what native ground?
And to what goal, what ending, bound?
"Behold, at last the poet's sphere!
But who," I said, "suffices here?

"For, ah! so much he has to do;
Be painter and musician too°!
The aspect of the moment show,
The feeling of the moment know!
The aspect not, I grant, express
Clear as the painter's art can dress;
The feeling not, I grant, explore
So deep as the musician's lore —
But clear as words can make revealing,
And deep as words can follow feeling.
But, ah! then comes his sorest spell
Of toil — he must life's *movement*° tell!

The thread which binds it all in one,
And not its separate parts alone.
The *movement* he must tell of life,
Its pain and pleasure, rest and strife;
His eye must travel down, at full,
The long, unpausing spectacle;
With faithful unrelaxing force
Attend it from its primal source,
From change to change and year to year
Attend it of its mid career,
Attend it to the last repose
And solemn silence of its close.

"The cattle rising from the grass
His thought must follow where they pass;
The penitent with anguish bow'd
His thought must follow through the crowd.
Yes! all this eddying, motley throng
That sparkles in the sun along,
Girl, statesman, merchant, soldier bold,
Master and servant, young and old,
Grave, gay, child, parent, husband, wife,
He follows home, and lives their life.

"And many, many are the souls
Life's movement fascinates, controls;
It draws them on, they cannot save
Their feet from its alluring wave;
They cannot leave it, they must go
With its unconquerable flow.
But ah! how few, of all that try
This mighty march, do aught but die!

For ill-endow'd for such a way,
Ill-stored in strength, in wits, are they.
They faint, they stagger to and fro,
And wandering from the stream they go;
In pain, in terror, in distress,
They see, all round, a wilderness.
Sometimes a momentary gleam
They catch of the mysterious stream;
Sometimes, a second's space, their ear
The murmur of its waves doth hear.
That transient glimpse in song they say,
But not of painter can pourtray —
That transient sound in song they tell,
But not, as the musician, well.
And when at last their snatches cease,
And they are silent and at peace,
The stream of life's majestic whole
Hath ne'er been mirror'd on their soul.

"Only a few the life-stream's shore
With safe unwandering feet explore;
Untired its movement bright attend,
Follow its windings to the end.
Then from its brimming waves their eye
Drinks up delighted ecstasy,
And its deep-toned, melodious voice
For ever makes their ear rejoice.
They speak! the happiness divine
They feel, runs o'er in every line;
Its spell is round them like a shower —
It gives them pathos, gives them power.
No painter yet hath such a way,
Nor no musician made, as they,

And gather'd on immortal knolls
Such lovely flowers for cheering souls.
Beethoven, Raphael, cannot reach
The charm which Homer, Shakespeare, teach.
To these, to these, their thankful race
Gives, then, the first, the fairest place;
And brightest is their glory's sheen,
For greatest hath their labour been.°"

SONNETS

QUIET WORK°

One lesson,° Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one
Though the loud° world proclaim their enmity —

Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity!
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier° schemes, accomplish'd in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry!

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil,
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,

Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting;
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

SHAKESPEARE°

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask — Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foil'd searching of mortality;

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,
Didst tread on earth unguess'd at. — Better so!

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

YOUTH'S AGITATIONS°

When I shall be divorced, some ten years hence,
From this poor present self which I am now;
When youth has done its tedious vain expense
Of passions that for ever ebb and flow;

Shall I not joy° youth's heats° are left behind,
And breathe more happy in an even clime°? —
Ah no, for then I shall begin to find
A thousand virtues in this hated time!

Then I shall wish its agitations back,
And all its thwarting currents of desire;
Then I shall praise the heat which then I lack,
And call this hurrying fever,° generous fire;

And sigh that one thing only has been lent
To youth and age in common — discontent.

AUSTERITY OF POETRY

That son of Italy° who tried to blow,
Ere Dante° came, the trump of sacred song,
In his light youth° amid a festal throng
Sate with his bride to see a public show.

Fair was the bride, and on her front did glow
Youth like a star; and what to youth belong —
Gay raiment, sparkling gauds, elation strong.
A prop gave way! crash fell a platform! lo,

'Mid struggling sufferers, hurt to death, she lay!
Shuddering, they drew her garments off — and found
A robe of sackcloth° next the smooth, white skin.

Such, poets, is your bride, the Muse! young, gay,
Radiant, adorn'd outside; a hidden ground
Of thought and of austerity within.

WORLDLY PLACE

Even in a palace, life may be led well!
So spake the imperial sage, purest of men,
Marcus Aurelius.° But the stifling den
Of common life, where, crowded up pell-mell,

Our freedom for a little bread we sell,
And drudge under some foolish° master's ken°

Who rates° us if we peer outside our pen —
Match'd with a palace, is not this a hell?

Even in a palace! On his truth sincere,
Who spoke these words, no shadow ever came;
And when my ill-school'd spirit is aflame

Some nobler, ampler stage of life to win,
I'll stop, and say: "There were no succour here!
The aids to noble life are all within."

EAST LONDON

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,°
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields,° look'd thrice dispirited.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said:
"Ill and o'erwork'd, how fare you in this scene?" —
"Bravely!" said he; "for I of late have been
Much cheer'd with thoughts of Christ, *the living bread.*"

O human soul! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light,
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,

To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam —
Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night!
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home.

WEST LONDON

Crouch'd on the pavement, close by Belgrave Square,°
A tramp I saw, ill, moody, and tongue-tied.
A babe was in her arms, and at her side
A girl; their clothes were rags, their feet were bare.

Some labouring men, whose work lay somewhere there,
Pass'd opposite; she touch'd her girl, who hied
Across and begg'd, and came back satisfied.
The rich she had let pass with frozen stare.

Thought I: "Above her state this spirit towers;
She will not ask of aliens, but of friends,
Of sharers in a common human fate.

"She turns from that cold succour, which attends
The unknown little from the unknowing great,
And points us to a better time than ours."

ELEGIAC POEMS

MEMORIAL VERSES°

April, 1850

GOETHE in Weimar sleeps,° and Greece,
Long since, saw Byron's° struggle cease.
But one such death remain'd to come;
The last poetic voice is dumb —
We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb.

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,
We bow'd our head and held our breath.
He taught us little; but our soul
Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.
With shivering heart the strife we saw
Of passion with eternal law;
And yet with reverential awe
We watch'd the fount of fiery life
Which served for that Titanic strife.

When Goethe's death was told, we said:
Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.
Physician of the iron age,°
Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
He took the suffering human race,

He read each wound, each weakness clear;
And struck his finger on the place,
And said: *Thou ailest here, and here!*
He look'd on Europe's dying hour
Of fitful dream and feverish power;
His eye plunged down the weltering strife,
The turmoil of expiring life —
He said: *The end is everywhere,*
Art still has truth, take refuge there!
And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and far below
His feet to see the lurid flow
Of terror, and insane distress,
And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth! — Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice!
For never has such soothing voice
Been to your shadowy world convey'd,
Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade
Heard the clear song of Orpheus° come
Through Hades, and the mournful gloom.
Wordsworth has gone from us — and ye,
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!
He too upon a wintry clime
Had fallen — on this iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth,
Smiles broke from us and we had ease;
The hills were round us, and the breeze

Went o'er the sun-lit fields again;
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
Our youth returned; for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead,
Spirits dried up and closely furl'd,
The freshness of the early world.

Ah! since dark days still bring to light
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,
Time may restore us in his course
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;
But where will Europe's latter hour
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
Others will teach us how to dare,
And against fear our breast to steel;
Others will strengthen us to bear —
But who, ah! who, will make us feel
The cloud of mortal destiny?
Others will front it fearlessly —
But who, like him, will put it by?

Keep fresh the grass upon his grave
O Rotha,° with thy living wave!
Sing him thy best! for few or none
Hears thy voice right, now he is gone.

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY°

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes°!
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,

Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropp'd herbage shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross° the strips of moon-blanch'd green,
Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest!

Here, where the reaper was at work of late —
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,°
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use —
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn° —
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,
And here till sun-down, shepherd! will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.°

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book° —
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
The story of the Oxford scholar poor,

Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-lore,
And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,
Two scholars, whom at college erst° he knew,
Met him, and of his way of life enquired;
Whereat he answer'd, that the gipsy-crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.
"And I," he said, "the secret of their art,
When fully learn'd, will to the world impart;
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill.°"

This said, he left them, and return'd no more.—
But rumours hung about the country-side,
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey,
The same the gipsies wore.
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst° in spring;
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,°
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock'd boors
Had found him seated at their entering.

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy trace;

And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet place;
Or in my boat I lie
Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer-heats,
'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm, green-muffled° Cumner hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,°
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the punt's rope chops round;
And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,°
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more! —
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,°
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers — the frail-leaf'd, white anemony,
Dark bluebells drench'd with dews of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves —
But none hath words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge,° when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass

Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering
Thames,
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,°
Have often pass'd thee near
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown;
Mark'd thine outlandish° garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air —
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone!

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee eying, all an April-day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And mark'd thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood° —
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagg'd° and shreds of grey,
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly° —
The blackbird, picking food,
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,

Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge,
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face tow'rd Hinksey° and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climb'd the hill,
And gain'd the white brow of the Cumner range;
Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snowflakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall° —
Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange.°

But what — I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil° did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-tribe;
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid —
Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white-flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark red-fruited yew-tree's° shade.

— No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours!
For what wears out the life of mortal men?
'Tis that from change to change their being rolls;
'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
And numb the elastic powers.
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,°
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius° we remit
Our worn-out life, and are — what we have been.

Thou hast not lived,° why should'st thou perish, so?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire°;

Else wert thou long since number'd with the dead!
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire!
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst — what we, alas! have not.°

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.°
O life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.°

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven! and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfill'd;
For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day —
Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it too°?

Yes, we await it! — but it still delays,
And then we suffer! and amongst us one,

Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.°

This for our wisest! and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear;
With close-lipp'd patience for our only friend,
Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair —
But none has hope like thine!
Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its head o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rife —
Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido° did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,°

With a free, onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silver'd branches° of the glade —
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles,° to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made;
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
—As some grave Tyrian° trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægæan isles°;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,°
Green, bursting figs, and tunnies° steep'd in brine —
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves —
And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail;

And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters° with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits°; and unbent sails
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come°;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.°

THYRSIS°

A MONODY, TO COMMEMORATE THE AUTHOR'S FRIEND, ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, WHO DIED AT FLORENCE, 1861

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills°!
In the two Hinkseys° nothing keeps the same;
The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,°
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks —
Are ye too changed, ye hills°?
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays!
Here came I often, often, in old days —
Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs°?

The Vale,° the three lone weirs,° the youthful Thames? —
This winter-eve is warm,
Humid the air! leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briers!
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,°
She needs not June for beauty's heightening,°

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night! —
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.°
Once pass'd I blindfold here, at any hour°;
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.
That single elm-tree bright
Against the west — I miss it! is it gone?
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,
Our friend, the Gipsy-Scholar, was not dead;
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.°

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick;
And with the country-folk acquaintance made
By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes° we first assay'd.
Ah me! this many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday!
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart;
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.°

It irk'd° him to be here, he could not rest.
He loved each simple joy the country yields,
He loved his mates; but yet he could not keep,°

For that a shadow lour'd on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly° sheep.
Some life of men unblest
He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd his head.
He went; his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms° that rage outside our happy ground;
He could not wait their passing, he is dead.°

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day —
When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
With blossoms red and white of fallen May°
And chestnut-flowers are strewn —
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I°!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps° come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not! light comer,° he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,

With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains° shall see;
See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,°
And blow a strain the world at last shall heed°—
For Time, not Corydon,° hath conquer'd thee!

Alack, for Corydon no rival now!—
But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate°;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,°
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine,° among whose crowned hair
Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.°

O easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,°
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face°;
She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.°
But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard!
Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirr'd;
And we should tease her with our plaint in vain!

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill!

Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,°
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham,° down by Sandford,° yields,
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries;

I know these slopes; who knows them if not I?—
But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
With thorns once studded, old, white-blossom'd trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried
High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time;
Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's team,
And only in the hidden brookside gleam
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
Above the locks, above the boating throng,
Unmoor'd our skiff when through the Wytham flats,°
Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among
And darting swallows and light water-gnats,
We track'd the shy Thames shore?
Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,
Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass?—
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well!

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,

I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent° with grey;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train;—
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seem'd so short
To the less practised eye of sanguine youth;
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,
Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare!
Unbreachable the fort
Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall;
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
And near and real the charm of thy repose,
And night as welcome as a friend would fall.°

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet!—Look, adown the dusk hill-side,
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!
From hunting with the Berkshire° hounds they come.
Quick! let me fly, and cross
Into yon farther field!—'Tis done; and see,
Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree!

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,

And in the scatter'd farms the lights come out.
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
Yet, happy omen, hail!
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale°
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
The morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale),

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there!—
Ah, vain! These English fields, this upland dim,
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him;
To a boon southern country he is fled,°
And now in happier air,
Wandering with the great Mother's° train divine
(And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)
Within a folding of the Apennine,

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old!—
Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
For thee the Lityerses-song again
Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing;
Sings his Sicilian fold,
His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes—
And how a call celestial round him rang,
And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies.°

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole° in these fields! yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry

'Neath the mild canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky.
Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
Fields where soft sheep° from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemonies in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?°

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.°
This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew;
'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold —
But the smooth-slipping weeks
Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone;
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound;
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour!
Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,
If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.
And this rude Cumner ground,
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime!
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note

Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat —
It fail'd, and thou wast mute!
Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.
Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying roar,
Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear:
Why faintest thou? I wandered till I died.
Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.
Dost thou ask proof? our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our scholar travels yet the loved hill-side.

RUGBY CHAPEL°

November 1857

Coldly, sadly descends
The autumn-evening. The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of wither'd leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace,
Silent; — hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!
The lights come out in the street,

In the school-room windows; — but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere,
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid.°

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
Of the autumn evening. But ah!
That word, *gloom*,° to my mind
Brings thee back, in the light
Of thy radiant vigour, again;
In the gloom of November we pass'd
Days not dark at thy side;
Seasons impair'd not the ray
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer-morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years,
We who till then in thy shade
Rested as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak,° have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore°
Tarriest thou now? For that force,

Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labour-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live —
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly repressest the bad!
Still, like a trumpet, doth rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succourest! — this was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.°

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth°? —
Most men eddy about
Here and there — eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die —
Perish; — and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,

In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost Ocean, have swell'd,
Foam'd for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave!
We, we have chosen our path —
Path to a clear-purposed goal,
Path of advance! — but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth —
Then, on the height, comes the storm.
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply,
Lightnings dazzle our eyes.°
Roaring torrents have breach'd
The track, the stream-bed descends
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep — the spray
Boils o'er its borders! aloft
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin°; alas,
Havoc is made in our train!

Friends, who set forth at our side,
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compress'd, we strain on,
On — and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs —
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks:
Whom in our party we bring?
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer: We bring
Only ourselves! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm.
Hardly ourselves we fought through,
Stripp'd, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.°

But thou would'st not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die.
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.

If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing — to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.°

And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honour'd and blest
By former ages, who else —
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see —
Seem'd but a dream of the heart,
Seem'd but a cry of desire.
Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me to-day
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous, and arid, and vile;
But souls temper'd with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God! — or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew

Your Father's innermost mind,
His, who unwillingly sees
One of his little ones lost—
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted, and fallen, and died!

See! In the rocks° of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending? — A God
Marshall'd them, gave them their goal.
Ah, but the way is so long!
Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe;
Factions divide them, their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.
— Ah, keep, keep them combined!
Else, of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive;
Sole they shall stray; in the rocks
Stagger for ever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye,° like angels, appear,
Radiant with ardour divine!
Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.

Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave!
Order, courage, return.
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God.°

NOTES

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM (Page 1)

"I am occupied with a thing that gives me more pleasure than anything I have ever done yet, which is a good sign, but whether I shall not ultimately spoil it by being obliged to strike it off in fragments instead of at one heat, I cannot quite say." (Arnold, in a letter to Mrs. Foster, April, 1853.)

"All my spare time has been spent on a poem which I have just finished, and which I think by far the best thing I have yet done, and I think it will be generally liked; though one can never be sure of this. I have had the greatest pleasure in composing it, a rare thing with me, and, as I think, a good test of the pleasure what you write is likely to afford to others. But the story is a very noble and excellent one." (Arnold, in a letter to his mother, May, 1853.)

The following synopsis of the story of Sohrab and Rustum, the "tale replete with tears," is gathered from several sources, chiefly Benjamin's *Persia*, in *The Story of the Nations*, Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia*, and the great Persian epic poem, *Shah Nameh*. The *Shah Nameh*, the original source of the story, and which purports to narrate the exploits of Persia's kings and champions over a space of thirty-six centuries, bears the same relation to Persian literature as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to the Greek, and the *Æneid* to the Latin, though in structure it more nearly resembles *Morte*

d'Arthur, which records in order the achievements of various heroes. In it the native poet Mansur ibn Ahmad, afterwards known to literature as Firdausi, the Paradisaical, has set down the early tales and traditions of his people with all the vividness and color common to oriental writers. The principal hero of the poem is the mighty Rustum, who, mounted on his famous horse Ruksh, performed prodigies of valor in defence of the Persian throne. Of all his adventures his encounter with Sohrab is the most dramatic. The poem was probably written in the latter half of the tenth century. As will be seen, the incidents narrated in Arnold's poem form but an episode in the complete story of the two champions.

Rustum (or Rustem), having killed a wild ass while hunting on the Turanian frontier, and having feasted on its flesh, composed himself to sleep, leaving his faithful steed, Ruksh (or Raksh), to graze untethered. On awakening, he found his horse had disappeared, and believing it had been stolen, the warrior proceeded towards Semenjan, a near-by city, in hopes of recovering his property. On the way, he learned that Ruksh had been found by the servants of the king and was stabled at Semenjan, as he had surmised. Upon Rustum's demand, the steed was promptly restored to him, and he was about to depart when he was prevailed upon to accept the king's invitation to tarry awhile and rest himself in feasting and idleness.

Now the king of Semenjan had a fair daughter named Tahmineh, who had become enamoured of Rustum because of his mighty exploits. Susceptible as she was beautiful, she made her attachment so evident that the young hero, who was as ardent as he was brave, readily yielded to the power of her fascination. The consent of the king having been obtained, Rustum and Tahmineh were married with all the rites prescribed by the laws of the country. A peculiar feature of this alliance lay in the fact that the king of Semenjan was feudatory to Afrasiab, the deadly enemy of Persia,

while Rustum was her greatest champion. At this time, however, the two countries were at peace.

For a time all went happily, then Rustum found it necessary to leave his bride, as he thought, for only a short time. At parting he gave her an onyx, which he wore on his arm, bidding her, if a daughter should be born to their union, to twine the gem in her hair under a fortunate star; but if a son, to bind it on his arm, and he would be insured a glorious career. Rustum then mounted Ruksh and rode away — as time proved, never to return.

The months went by, and to the lonely bride was born a marvellous son, whom, because of his comely features, she named Sohrab. Fearing Rustum would send for the boy when he grew older, and thus rob her of her treasure, Tahmineh sent word to him that the child was a girl — "no son," and Rustum took no further interest in it.

While still of tender years, Sohrab showed signs of his noble lineage. He early displayed a love for horses, and at the age of ten years, according to the tradition, was large and handsome and highly accomplished in the use of arms. Realizing at length that he was of lofty descent, he insisted that his mother, who had concealed the fact, should inform him of the name of his father. Being told that it was the renowned Rustum, he exclaimed, "Since he is my father, I shall go to his aid; he shall become king of Persia and together we shall rule the world." After this the youth caused a horse worthy of him to be found, and with the aid of his grandfather, the king of Semenjan, he prepared to go on the quest, attended by a mighty host.

When Afrasiab, the Turanian ruler, learned that Sohrab was going to war with the Persians, he was greatly pleased, and after counselling with his wise men, decided openly to assist him in his enterprises, with the expectation that both Rustum and Sohrab would fall in battle and Persia be at his mercy. He accordingly

sent an army of auxiliaries to Sohrab, accompanied by two astute courtiers, Houman and Barman, who, under the guise of friendship, were to act as counsellors to the young leader. These he ordered to keep the knowledge of their relationship from father and son and to seek to bring about an encounter between them, in the hope that Sohrab would slay Rustum, Afrasiab's most dreaded foeman, after which the unsuspecting youth might easily be disposed of by treachery.

Sohrab, with his army and that of Afrasiab, set out, intending to fight his way until Rustum should be sent against him, when he would reveal himself to his father and form an alliance with him that would place the line of Seistan on the throne. On the way southward, Sohrab overthrew and captured the Persian champion, Hujir, and the same day conquered the warrior maiden Gurdafrid, whose beauty and tears, however, prevailed upon him to release her. Guzdehern, father of Gurdafrid, recognizing Sohrab's prowess, and alarmed for the safety of the Persian throne, secretly despatched a courier to the king Kai Kaoos to warn him of the young Tartar's approach. Kaoos, in great terror, sent for Rustum to hurry to his aid. Regardless of the king's request, Rustum spent eight days in feasting, then presented himself at the court. Kaoos, angered at the delay, ordered both the champion and the messenger to be executed forthwith; but Rustum effected his escape on Ruksh, and returned to Seistan, leaving Persia to her fate. The king's wrath, however, soon gave place to fear; and recognizing the danger of his throne unsupported by Rustum's valor, he despatched messengers to him with humble petitions and apologies. After much protesting, Rustum finally yielded and accompanied the Persian army, under the king Kai Kaoos, which at once set forth to encounter Sohrab.

The morning before the opening of hostilities, Sohrab, taking the Persian Hujir, whom he still held a prisoner, to the top of a rocky

eminence, ordered him to point out the tents of the chief warriors of the Persian army, particularly Rustum's. But Hujir, fearing lest Sohrab should attack Rustum unexpectedly and so overcome him, declared that the great chieftain's tent was not among those on the plain below. Disappointed at his failure to find his father, Sohrab led his army in a fierce onslaught on the Persians, driving them in confusion before him. In this dire extremity Kai Kaoos sent for Rustum, who was somewhat apart from the main troop. Exclaiming that the king never sent for him except when he had got himself into trouble, the warrior armed, mounted Ruksh, and rushed to the combat. By mutual consent the two champions withdrew to a retired spot, where, unmolested, they might fight out their quarrel hand to hand. As they approached each other, Rustum, moved with compassion by the youth of his foe, tried to dissuade Sohrab from his purpose, and counselled him to retire. Sohrab, filled with sudden hope, — an instinctive feeling that the father whom he was seeking stood before him, — eagerly demanded whether this were Rustum. But Rustum, fearing treachery, said he was only an ordinary man, having neither palace nor princely kingdom — not Rustum.

They marked off the lists, and, mounted on their powerful horses, fought first with javelins, then with swords, clubs, and bows and arrows. After several hours of fighting both were exhausted, and by tacit consent they retired to opposite sides of the lists for rest. When the combat was renewed, Sohrab gained a slight advantage. A truce was then made for the night, and the warriors returned to their tents to prepare for the morrow.

With daybreak the struggle was renewed. To prevent the armies from intervening or engaging in battle, they were removed to a distance of several miles. Midway between, Sohrab and Rustum met in the midst of a lonely, treeless waste. More convinced than before that his adversary was Rustum, Sohrab sought to bring

about a reconciliation, but Rustum refused. This time they fought on foot. From morning till afternoon they fought, neither gaining any decided advantage. At last Sohrab succeeded in felling Rustum to the earth, and was about to slay him, when the Persian called out that it was not the custom in chivalrous warfare to slay a champion until he was thrown the second time. Sohrab, generous as brave, released his prostrate foe; and again father and son parted.

Rustum, scarcely believing himself alive after such an escape, purified himself with water, and prayed that his wounds might be healed and his accustomed strength restored to him. Never before had he been so beset in battle.

With morning came the renewal of the combat, both champions determining to end it that day. Late in the evening Rustum, by a supreme effort, seized Sohrab around the waist and hurled him to the ground. Then, fearing lest the youth prove too strong for him in the end, he drew his blade and plunged it into Sohrab's bosom.

Sohrab forgave Rustum, but warned him to beware the vengeance of his father, the mighty Rustum, who must soon learn that he had slain his son Sohrab. "I went out to seek my father," cried the dying youth, "for my mother had told me by what tokens I should know him, and I perish for longing after him. . . . Yet I say unto thee, if thou shouldst become a fish that swimmeth in the depths of the ocean, if thou shouldst change into a star that is concealed in the farthest heaven, my father would draw thee forth from thy hiding-place, and avenge my death upon thee, when he shall learn that the earth is become my bed. For my father is Rustum the Pehliva, and it shall be told unto him, how that Sohrab his son perished in the quest after his face." These words were as death to the aged hero, who fell senseless at the side of his wounded son. When he had recovered he called in despair for proofs of what Sohrab had said. The now dying youth tore open his mail

and showed his father the onyx which his mother had bound on his arm as directed.

The sight of his own signet rendered Rustum quite frantic; he cursed himself, and would have put an end to his existence but for the efforts of his expiring son. After Sohrab's death he burnt his tents and carried the corpse to his father's home in Seistan, and buried it there. The Tartar army, agreeable to Sohrab's last request, was permitted to return home unmolested. When the tidings of Sohrab's death reached his mother, she was inconsolable, and died in less than a year.

In the main the story as told by Arnold follows the original narrative. A careful investigation of the alterations made, and the effect thus produced, will lend added interest to the study of the poem and give ample theme for composition work.

1. And the first grey of morning fill'd the east. Note the abrupt opening. What is gained by its use? At what point in the story as told in the introductory note does the poem take up the narrative? Be sure to get a clear mental picture of the initiative scene. *And* is here used in a manner common in the Scriptures. Cf. "and the Lord spake unto Moses," etc.

2. Oxus. The chief river of Central Asia, which separated Turan from Iran or the Persian Empire, called Oxus by the Greeks and Romans, and the Jihun or Amu by the Arabs and Persians. It takes its source in Lake Sir-i-Kol, in the Pamir table-land, at a height of 15,600 feet, flows northwest, and empties into the Aral Sea on the south. Its length is about 1300 miles.

"The introduction of the tranquil pictures of the Oxus, both at the beginning and close of the poem (ll. 875-892), flowing steadily on, unmoved by the tragedy which has been enacted on her shore, forms one of the most artistic features in the setting of the poem."

3. Tartar camp. The Tartars were nomadic tribes of Central Asia and southern Russia. The so-called Black Tartars, identified

with the Scythians of the Greek historians, inhabited the basin of the Aral and Caspian Seas, and are the tribe referred to in the poem. They are a fierce, warlike people; hence our expression, "caught a Tartar."

11. Peran-Wisa. A celebrated Turanian chief, here in command of Afrasiab's army, which was composed of representatives of many Tartar tribes, as indicated in ll. 119–134.

15. Pamere, or Pamir. An extensive plateau region of Central Asia, called by the natives the "roof of the world." Among the rivers having their source in this plateau are the Oxus, l. 2, and the Jaxartes, l. 129.

38. Afrasiab. The king of the Tartars, and one of the principal heroes of the *Shah Nameh*, the Persian "Book of Kings." He is reputed to have been strong as a lion and to have had few equals as a warrior.

40. Samarcand. A city in the district of Serafshan, Turkestan, to the east of Bokhara; now a considerable commercial and manufacturing centre, and a centre of Mohammedan learning.

42. Ader-baijan. The northwest province of Persia, on the Turanian frontier.

45. At my boy's years. See introductory note to poem.

60. common fight. In the sense of a general engagement. Be sure to catch the reason why Sohrab makes his request.

61. sunk. That is, lost sight of.

67. common chance. See note, l. 60. Which would be the more dangerous, a "single" or "common" combat? Why?

70. To find a father thou hast never seen. See introductory note to poem.

82. Seistan. A province of southwest Afghanistan bordering on the Persian province of Yezd. It is intersected by the Helmund River (l. 751), which flows into the Hamoon Lake, now scarcely more than a morass. On an island in this lake are ruins of fortifi-

cations called Fort Rustum. This territory was long held by Rustum's family, feudatory to the Persian kings. **Zal.** Rustum's father, ruler of Seistan. See note, l. 232.

83–85. Whether that . . . or in some quarrel, etc. Either because his mighty strength . . . or because of some quarrel, etc.

85. Persian King. That is, Kai Kaoos (or Kai Khosroo). See introductory note to poem; also note, l. 223.

86–91. There go! etc. The touching solicitation of these lines is wholly Arnold's.

99. Why **ruler's staff, no sword?**

101. Karà Kul. A district some thirty miles southwest of Bokhara, noted for the excellence of its pasturage, and for its fleeces.

107. Haman. Next to Peran-Wisa in command of Tartar army. See Houman, in introductory note to poem.

113–114. Casbin. A fortified city in the province of Irak-Ajemi, Persia, situated on the main route from Persia to Europe, and at one time the capital of the Iranian empire. Just to the north of the city rise the **Elburz Mountains** (l. 114), which separate the Persian Plateau from the depression containing the Caspian and Aral Seas.

115. frore. Frozen, from the Anglo-Saxon *froren.*

> " . . . the parching air
> Burns frore, and cold performs the effect of fire."
> —MILTON. *Paradise Lost,* ll. 594–595, Book II.

119. Bokhara. Here the state of Bokhara, an extensive region of Central Asia, touching the Aral Sea to the north, the Oxus to the south, and Khiva to the west. It has an estimated area of 235,000 square miles, and contains nineteen cities of considerable size, of which the capital, Bokhara, is most important.

120. Khiva. A khanate situated in the valley of the lower Oxus, bordering Bokhara on the southeast. **ferment the milk**

of mares. An intoxicating drink, *Koumiss*, made of camel's or mare's milk, is in wide use among the steppe tribes.

121. Toorkmuns. A branch of the Turkish race found chiefly in northern Persia and Afghanistan.

122. Tukas. From the province of Azer-baijan.

123. Attruck. A river of Khorassan, near the frontier of Khiva; it has a west course, and enters the Caspian Sea on the east side.

128. Ferghana. A khanate of Turkestan, north of Bokhara, in the upper valley of the Sir Daria.

129. Jaxartes. The ancient name of the Sir Daria River. It takes its source in the Thian Shan Mountains, one of the Pamir Plateau ranges, and flows with a general direction north, emptying into the Aral Sea on the east side.

131. Kipchak. A khanate some seventy miles below Khiva on the Oxus.

132. Kalmucks. A nomadic branch of the Mongolian race, dwelling in western Siberia. **Kuzzaks.** Now commonly called Cossacks; a warlike people inhabiting the steppes of southern Russia and extensive portions of Asia. Their origin is uncertain.

133. Kirghizzes. A rude nomadic people of Mongolian-Tartar race found in northern Turkestan.

138. Khorassan. (That is, the region of the sun.) A province of northwestern Persia, largely desert. The origin of the name is prettily suggested by Moore in the opening poem of *Lalla Rookh*: —

> "In the delightful province of the sun,
> The first of Persian lands he shines upon," etc.

147. fix'd. Stopped suddenly, halted.

154–169. Note the effect the challenge has on the two armies.

156. corn. Here used with its European sense of "grain." It is only in America that the word signifies Indian corn or "maize."

160. Cabool. Capital of northern Afghanistan, and an important commercial city.

161. Indian Caucasus. A lofty mountain range north of Cabool, which forms the boundary between Turkestan and Afghanistan.

173. King. See note, l. 85.

177. lion's heart. Explain the line. Why are the terms here used so forcible in the mouth of Gudurz?

178–183. Aloof he sits, etc. One is reminded by Rustum's deportment here, of Achilles sulking in his tent and nursing his wrath against Agamemnon. — *Iliad*, Book I.

199. sate. Old form of "sat," common in poetry.

200. falcon. A kind of hawk trained to catch game birds.

217. Iran. The official name of Persia.

221. Go to! Hebraic expression. Frequently found in Shakespeare.

223. Kai Khosroo. According to the *Shah Nameh*, the thirteenth Turanian king. He reigned in the sixth century, and has been identified with Cyrus the Great.

230. Not that one slight helpless girl, etc. See ll. 609–611, also introduction to the poem.

232. snow-haired Zal. According to tradition, Zal was born with snow-white hair. His father Lahm, believing this an ill omen, doomed the unfortunate babe to be exposed on the loftiest summit of the Elburz Mountains. The Simurgh, a great bird or griffin, found him and cared for him till grown, then restored him to his repentant parent. He subsequently married the Princess Rudabeh of Seistan, by whom he became father of Rustum.

243–248. He spoke . . . men. Note carefully Gudurz's argument. Why so effective with Rustum?

257. But I will fight unknown and in plain arms. The shields and arms of the champions were emblazoned with mottoes and devices. Why does Rustum determine to lay aside his accustomed

arms and fight incognito? What effect does this determination have upon the ultimate outcome of the situation? Read the story of the arming of Achilles (Book XIX., Homer's *Iliad*), and compare with Rustum's preparation for battle.

266. device. See note, l. 257.

277. Dight. Adorned, dressed.

> "The clouds in thousand liveries dight."
> —MILTON. *L'Allegro*, l. 62.

286. Bahrein or Aval. A group of islands in the Persian Gulf, celebrated for its pearl fisheries.

288. tale. Reckoning, number.

> "And every shepherd tells his *tale*,
> Under the hawthorn in the dale."
> —MILTON. *L'Allegro*, ll. 67–68.

306. flowers. Decorates, beautifies with floral designs.

311. perused. Studied, observed closely.

318. In a letter dated November, 1852, Mr. Arnold speaks of the figures in his poem as follows: "I can only say that I took a great deal of trouble to orientalize them, because I thought they looked strange, and jarred, if western." What is gained by their use?

325. vast. Large, mighty.

326. tried. Proved, experienced.

328. Never was that field lost or that foe saved. Note the power gained in this line by the use of the alliteration.

330. Be govern'd. Be influenced, persuaded.

343. by thy father's head! Such oaths are common to the extravagant speech of the oriental peoples.

344. Art thou not Rustum? See introductory note to poem.

367. vaunt. Boast implied in the challenge.

380. Thou wilt not fright me so! That is, by such talk.

401. tower'd. Remained stationary, poised.

406. full struck. Struck squarely.

412. Hyphasis, Hydaspes. Two of the rivers of the Punjab in northern India, now known as the Beas and Jhylum. In 326 B.C. Alexander defeated Porus on the banks of the latter stream.

414. wrack. Ruin, havoc. (Poetical.)

418. glancing. In the sense of darting aside.

435. hollow. Unnatural in tone.

452. like that autumn-star. Probably Sirius, the Dog Star, under whose ascendancy, according to ancient beliefs, epidemic diseases prevailed.

454. crest. That is, helmet and plume.

466. Remember all thy valour. That is, summon up all your courage.

469. girl's wiles. Explain the line.

470. kindled. Roused, angered.

481. unnatural: because of the kinship of the combatants.

481–486. for a cloud, etc. A distinctly Homeric imitation. Cf. the cloud that enveloped Paris. — Book III., ll. 465–469, of the *Iliad.*

489. And the sun sparkled, etc. Why this reference to the clear Oxus stream at this moment of intense tragedy?

495. helm. Helmet; defensive armor for the head.

497. shore. Past tense of *shear*, to cut.

499. bow'd his head: because of the force of the blow.

508. curdled. Thickened as with fear.

516. Rustum! Why did this word so affect Sohrab? Note the author's skill in working up to this climax in the narrative.

527–539. Then with a bitter smile, etc. Compare these words of the victor, Rustum, with the words of Sohrab, ll. 427–447, when the advantage was with him.

536. glad. Make happy.

"That which *gladded* all the warrior train."

— DRYDEN.

538. Dearer to the red jackals, etc. Cf. I. Sam. xvii. 44: "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field." Careful investigation will show the poem to abound with Biblical as well as classical parallelisms.

556–575. As when some hunter, etc. One of the truly great similes in the English language.

563. sole. Alone, solitary. From the Latin *solus*.

570. glass. Reflect as in a mirror.

596. bruited up. Noised abroad.

613. the style. The name or title.

625. that old king. The king of Semenjan. See introductory note to poem.

632. Of age and looks, etc. That is, of such age as he (Sohrab) would be, if born of his (Rustum's) union with Tahmineh.

658–660. I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm, etc. This is Arnold's conception. In the original story Sohrab wore an onyx stone as an amulet. The onyx was supposed to incite the wearer to deeds of valor.

664. corselet. Protective armor for the body.

673. cunning. Skilful, deft.

679. griffin. In the natural history of the ancients, an imaginary animal, half lion and half eagle. Here the Simurgh. See note, l. 232.

708–710. unconscious hand. Note how the dying Sohrab seeks to console the grief-stricken Rustum.

> "Such is my destiny, such is the will of fortune.
> It was decreed that I should perish by the hand of my father."
> —*Shah Nameh.*

717. have found (him). Note the ellipsis.

723–724. I came . . . passing wind. The *Shah Nameh* has—

> "I came like a flash of lightning, and now I depart like the wind."

736. caked the sand. Hardened into cakes.

751. Helmund. See note, l. 83.

752. Zirrah. Another lake in Seistan, southeast of Hamoon, now almost dry.

763–765. Moorghab, Tejend and Kohik. Rivers of Turkestan which lose themselves in the deserts to the south of Bokhara. The **northern Sir** is the Sir Daria, or Jaxartes. See note, l. 129.

788. And heap a stately mound, etc. Persian tradition says that a large monument, in shape like the hoof of a horse, was placed over the spot where Sohrab was buried.

830. on that day. Shortly after the death of Afrasiab, the Persian monarch Kai Khosroo, accompanied by a large number of his nobles, went to a spring far to the north, the location fixed upon as a place for their repose. Here the king died, and those who went with him afterward perished in a tempest. Sohrab predicted Rustum would be one of those lost, but tradition does not have it so.

861. Persepolis. An ancient capital of Persia, the ruins of which are known as "the throne of Jemshid," after a mythical king.

878. Chorasma. A region of Turkestan, the seat of a powerful empire in the twelfth century, but now greatly reduced. Its present limits are about the same as those of Khiva. See note, l. 120.

880. Right for the polar star. That is, due north. **Orgunje.** A village on the Oxus some seventy miles below Khiva, and near the head of its delta.

890. luminous home. The Aral Sea.

891. new bathed stars. As the stars appear on the horizon, they seem to have come up out of the sea.

875–892. Discuss the poet's purpose in introducing the remarkable word-picture of these closing lines of the poem. See also note, ll. 231–250, *The Scholar-Gipsy.*

SAINT BRANDAN (PAGE 28)

In this poem Arnold has vividly presented a quaint legend of Judas Iscariot, popular in the Middle Ages. Saint Brandan (490–577) was a celebrated Irish monk, famous for his voyages. "According to the legendary accounts of his travels, he set sail with others to seek the terrestrial paradise which was supposed to exist in an island of the Atlantic. Various miracles are related of the voyage, but they are always connected with the great island where the monks are said to have landed. The legend was current in the time of Columbus and long after, and many connected St. Brandan's island with the newly discovered America. He is commemorated on May 16." — *The Century Cyclopedia of Names.*

7. Hebrides. A group of islands off the northwestern coast of Scotland.

11. hurtling Polar lights. A reference to the rapid, changing movements of the Aurora Borealis.

18. Of hair that red. According to tradition, Judas Iscariot's hair was red.

21. sate. See note, l. 199, *Sohrab and Rustum.*

31. self-murder. After betraying Christ, Judas hanged himself. See Matt. xxvii. 5 and Acts i. 18.

38. The Leper recollect. There is no scriptural authority for this incident.

40. Joppa, or Jaffa. A small maritime town of Palestine — the ancient port of Jerusalem. There is also a small village called Jaffa in Galilee, some two miles southwest of Nazareth, which may have been the place the poet had in mind.

Image the situation as presented in the first several stanzas. Why locate in the sea without a "human shore," l. 12? Is there any especial reason for having the time Christmas night? Note

the dramatic introduction of Judas. What effect did his appearance have on the saint? How was the latter reassured? Give reasons why Judas felt impelled to tell his story. Tell the story. Does he praise or belittle his act of charity? Why does he say "that *chance* act of good"? How was it rewarded? Explain his last expression. Was he about to say more? If so, what? What effect did Judas's story have on Saint Brandan? Why? What is the underlying thought in the poem? Discuss the form of verse used and its appropriateness to the theme.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN (PAGE 31)

"The title of this poem inevitably brings to mind Tennyson's two poems, *The Merman* and *The Mermaid.* A comparison will show that, in this instance at least, the Oxford poet has touched his subject not less melodiously and with finer and deeper feeling. — Margaret will not listen to her 'Children's voices, wild with pain'; — dearer to her is the selfish desire to save her own soul than is the light in the eyes of her little Mermaiden, dearer than the love of the king of the sea, who yearns for her with sorrow-laden heart. Here is there an infinite tenderness and an infinite tragedy."

— L. DUPONT SYLE, *From Milton to Tennyson.*

Legends of this kind abound among the sea-loving Gaelic and Cymric people. Nowhere, perhaps, have they been given a more pleasing and touching expression than in Arnold's poem. Note carefully the dramatic manner in which the pathos of the story is presented and developed.

6. wild white horses. Breakers, whitecaps.

13. Margaret. A favorite name with Arnold. See *Isolation* and *A Dream* in this volume.

39. ranged. See note, l. 73, *The Strayed Reveller.*

42. mail. Protective covering.

54. Why "down **swung** the sound of a far-off bell"?

81. seal'd. Fastened; fixed intently upon, as though spell-bound.

89–93. Hark . . . sun. In her song Margaret shows she is still keenly alive to human interests, temporal and spiritual. The **priest, bell,** and **holy well** (l. 91) symbolize the church, here Roman Catholic. The **bell** is used in the Roman Church to call especial attention to the more important portions of the service; the **well** is the holy-water font.

129. heaths starr'd with broom. The flower of the broom plant, common in England, is yellow; hence, *starr'd.*

In his work on Matthew Arnold, George Saintsbury speaks of this poem as follows: "It is, I believe, not so 'correct' as it once was to admire this [poem]; but I confess indocility to correctness, at least the correctness which varies with fashion. *The Forsaken Merman* is not a perfect poem — it has *tongueurs*, though it is not long; it has its inadequacies, those incompetences of expression which are so oddly characteristic of its author; and his elaborate simplicity, though more at home here than in some other places, occasionally gives a dissonance. But it is a great poem, — one by itself, — one which finds and keeps its own place in the fore-ordained gallery or museum, with which every true lover of poetry is provided, though he inherits it by degrees. None, I suppose, will deny its pathos; I should be sorry for any one who fails to perceive its beauty. The brief picture of the land, and the fuller one of the sea, and that (more elaborate still) of the occupations of the fugitive, all have their charm. But the triumph of the piece is in one of those metrical coups, which give the triumph of all the greatest poetry, in the sudden change from the slower movements of the earlier stanzas, or strophes, to the quicker sweep of the famous conclusions."

What is the opening situation in the poem? Have the merman and his children just reached the shore, or have they been there some time? Why so? Why does the merman still linger, when he is convinced that further delay will count for nothing? Why does he urge the children to call? What is shown by his repeated question — "was it yesterday"? Tell the story of Margaret's departure for the upper world, and discuss the validity of her reason for going. Do you think she intended to return? What is the significance of her smile just before departing? Give a word picture of what the sea-folk saw as they lingered in the churchyard. Will Margaret ever grieve for the past? If so, when? Why? Who has your sympathy most, Margaret, the forsaken merman, or the children? Why? Do you condemn Margaret for the way she has done, or do you feel she was justified in her actions? Discuss the versification, giving special attention to its effect on the movement of the poem.

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT (PAGE 36)

The story of Tristram and Iseult is one of the most vivid and passionate of the Arthurian cycle of legends, and is a favorite with the poets. The following version is abridged from Dunlop's *History of Fiction*.

"In the court of his uncle, King Marc, the king of Cornwall, who at this time resided at the castle of Tyntagel, Tristram became expert in all knightly exercises. . . . The king of Ireland, at Tristram's solicitation, promised to bestow his daughter Iseult in marriage on King Marc. . . . The mother of Iseult gave to her daughter's confidante a philtre, or love-potion, to be administered on the night of her nuptials. Of this beverage Tristram and Iseult unfortunately partook. Its influence, during the remainder of their lives, regulated the affections and destiny of the lovers.

"After the arrival of Tristram and Iseult in Cornwall, and the nuptials of the latter with King Marc, a great part of the romance is occupied with their contrivances to procure secret interviews. . . . Tristram, being forced to leave Cornwall on account of the displeasure of his uncle, repaired to Brittany, where lived Iseult with the White Hands. He married her, more out of gratitude than love. Afterwards he proceeded to the dominions of Arthur, which became the theatre of unnumbered exploits.

"Tristram, subsequent to these events, returned to Brittany and to his long-neglected wife. There, being wounded and sick, he was soon reduced to the lowest ebb. In this situation he despatched a confidant to the queen of Cornwall to try if he could induce her to follow him to Brittany.

"Meanwhile Tristram awaited the arrival of the queen with such impatience that he employed one of his wife's damsels to watch at the harbor. Through her, Iseult learned Tristram's secret, and, filled with jealousy, flew to her husband as the vessel which bore the queen of Cornwall was wafted toward the harbor, and reported that the sails were black (the signal that Iseult, Marc's queen, had refused Tristram's request to come to him). Tristram, penetrated with inexpressible grief, died. The account of Tristram's death was the first intelligence which the queen of Cornwall heard on landing. She was conducted to his chamber, and expired holding him in her arms."

1. Is she not come? That is, Iseult of Ireland. Arnold's poem takes up the story at the point where Tristram, now on his death-bed, is watching eagerly for the coming of Iseult, Marc's queen, for whom he had sent his confidant to Cornwall. Evidently he has just awakened and is still somewhat confused; see l. 7. Surely none will fail to appreciate so dramatic a situation.

5. What . . . be? That is, what lights are those to the northward, the direction from which Iseult would come?

8. Iseult. Here Iseult of the White Hands, daughter of King Hoel of Brittany and wife of Tristram.

20. Arthur's court. Arthur, the half-mythical king of the Britons, set up his court at Camelot, which Caxton locates in Wales and Malory near Winchester. Here was gathered the famous company of champions known as the "Knights of the Round Table," whose feats have been extensively celebrated in song and story. Among these knights Tristram held high rank, both as a warrior and a harpist. See ll. 17–19.

23. Lyoness. A mythical region near Cornwall, the home country of Arthur and Tristram.

30–31. Hence the name, Iseult of the White Hands.

56–68. See introductory note to poem for explanation. **Tyntagel.** A village in Cornwall near the sea. Near it is the ruined Tyntagel Castle, the reputed birthplace of Arthur. In the romance of Sir Tristram it is the castle of **King Marc**, the cowardly and treacherous king of Cornwall, the southwest county of England. **teen.** See note, l. 147, *The Scholar-Gipsy.*

88. wanders, in fancy. Note how the wounded knight's mind flits from scene to scene, always centring around Iseult of Ireland.

91. O'er . . . sea. The Irish Sea. He is dreaming of his return trip from Ireland with Iseult, "under the cloudless sky of May" (l. 96).

129–132. See introductory note to poem. **The green isle.** Ireland is noted for its green fields; hence the name, Emerald (green) Isle.

134. on loud Tyntagel's hill. A high headland on the coast of Wales. Discuss the force of the adjective "loud" in this connection.

137–160. And that . . . more. See introductory note to poem.

161. pleasaunce-walks. A pleasure garden, screened by trees,

shrubs, and close hedges — here a trysting-place. After the marriage of Iseult to King Marc, she and Tristram contrived to continue their relationship in secret.

164. fay. Faith. (Obsolete except in poetry.)

180. Tristram, having been discovered by King Marc in his intrigues with Iseult, was forced to leave Cornwall; hence his visit to Brittany and subsequent marriage to Iseult of the White Hands. See introductory note to poem.

192. lovely orphan child. Iseult of Brittany.

194. chatelaine. From the French, meaning the mistress of a château — a castle or fortress.

200. stranger-knight, ill-starr'd. That is, Tristram, whose many mishaps argued his being born under an unlucky star. See also the account of his birth, note, ll. 83–86, Part II.

203. Launcelot's guest at Joyous Gard. Prior to his visit to Brittany, Tristram had imprisoned his uncle, King Marc, and eloped with Iseult to the domains of King Arthur. While there he resided at Joyous Gard, the favorite castle of Launcelot, which that knight assigned to the lovers as their abode.

204. Welcomed here. That is, in Brittany, where he was nursed back to health by Iseult of the White Hands. See introductory note to poem.

215–226. His long rambles . . . ground. Account for Tristram's discontent, as indicated in these lines.

234–237. All red . . . bathed in foam. The kings of Britain agreed with Arthur to make war upon Rome. Arthur, leaving Modred in charge of his kingdom, made war upon the Romans, and, after a number of encounters, Lucius Tiberius was killed and the Britons were victorious. — GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH, Book IV, Chapter XV; Book X, Chapters I–XIII. According to Malory, Arthur captured many French and Italian cities (see ll. 250–251) during this continental invasion, and was finally crowned king at

Rome. It seems that he afterward despatched a considerable number of his knights to carry the Christian faith among the heathen German tribes. See ll. 252–253.

238. moonstruck knight. A reference to the mystical influence the ancients supposed the moon to exert over men's minds and actions.

239. What foul fiend rides thee? What evil spirit possesses you and keeps you from the fight?

240. her. That is, Iseult of Ireland.

243. wanders forth again, in fancy.

245. secret in his breast. What secret?

250–253. See note, ll. 234–237. **blessed sign.** The cross.

255. Roman Emperor. That is, Lucius Tiberius. See note, ll. 234–237.

258. leaguer. Consult dictionary.

261. what boots it? That is, what difference will it make?

303. recks not. Has no thought of (archaic).

308–314. My princess . . . good night. Are Tristram's words sincere, or has he a motive in thus dismissing Iseult?

373–374. From a dramatic standpoint, what is the purpose of these two lines?

PART II

With the opening of Part II the lovers are restored to each other. The dying Tristram, worn with fever and impatient with long waiting, unjustly charges Iseult with cruelty for not having come to him with greater haste. Her gentle, loving words, however, quickly dispel his doubts as to her loyalty to her former vows. A complete reconciliation takes place, and they die in each other's embrace. The picture of the Huntsman on the arras is one of the most notable in English poetry.

47. honied nothings. Explain. Compare with

"his tongue
Dropt manna."
— *Paradise Lost*, ll. 112–113, Book II.

81–88. Tristram was born in the forest, where his mother Isabella, sister to King Marc, had gone in search of her recreant husband.

97–100. Tennyson, in *The Last Tournament*, follows Malory in the story of Tristram's and Iseult's death. "That traitor, King Mark, slew the noble knight, Sir Tristram, as he sat harping before his lady, La Beale Isoud, with a trenchant glaive, for whose death was much bewailing of every knight that ever was in Arthur's days . . . and La Beale Isoud died swooning upon the cross of Sir Tristram, whereof was great pity." — MALORY'S *Morte d'Arthur*.

113. sconce. Consult dictionary.

116–122. Why this restlessness on the part of Iseult? Why her frequent glances toward the door?

132. dogg'd. Worried, pursued. Coleridge uses the epithet "star-dogged moon," l. 212, Part III, *The Ancient Mariner*.

147–193. For the poet's purpose in introducing the remarkable word-picture of these lines, see note on the Tyrian trader, ll. 231–250, *The Scholar-Gipsy*.

PART III

After the death of Tristram and Iseult of Ireland, our thoughts inevitably turn to Iseult of the White Hands. The infinite pathos of her life has aroused our deepest sympathy, and we naturally want to know further concerning her and Tristram's children.

13. cirque. A circle (obsolete or poetical). See l. 7, Part III.

18. holly-trees and juniper. Evergreen trees common in Europe and America.

22. fell-fare (or field-fare). A small thrush found in Northern Europe.

26. stagshorn. A common club-moss.

37. old-world Breton history. That is, the story of Merlin and Vivian, ll. 153–224, Part III.

79–81. Compare with the following lines from Wordsworth's *Michael*: —

> "This light was famous in its neighborhood.
> . . . For, as it chanced,
> Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
> Stood single. . . .
> And from this constant light so regular
> And so far seen, the House itself, by all
> Who dwelt within the limits of the vale
> . . . was named *The Evening Star*."

81. iron coast. This line inevitably calls to mind a stanza from Tennyson's *Palace of Art*: —

> "One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
> You seemed to hear them climb and fall
> And roar, rock-thwarted, under bellowing caves,
> Beneath the windy wall."

92. prie-dieu. Praying-desk. From the French *prier*, pray; *dieu*, God.

97. seneschal. A majordomo; a steward. Originally meant *old* (that is, *chief*) *servant*; from the Gothic *sins*, old, and *salks*, a servant. — SKEAT.

134. gulls. Deceives, tricks.

> "The vulgar, *gulled* into rebellion, armed."
>
> — DRYDEN.

140. posting here and there. That is, restlessly changing from place to place and from occupation to occupation.

143–145. Like that bold Cæsar, etc. Julius Cæsar (100 ?–44

B.C.). The incident here alluded to is mentioned in Suetonius's *Life of the Deified Julius*, Chapter VII. "Farther Spain fell to the lot of Cæsar as questor. When, at the command of the Roman people, he was holding court and had come to Cadiz, he noticed in the temple of Hercules a statue of Alexander the Great. At sight of this statue he sighed, as if disgusted at his own lack of achievement, because he had done nothing of note by the time in life (Cæsar was then thirty-two) that Alexander had conquered the world." (Free translation.)

146–150. Prince Alexander, etc. Alexander III., surnamed "The Great" (356–323 B.C.), was the most famous of Macedonian generals and conquerors, and the first in order of time of the four most celebrated commanders of whom history makes mention. In less than fifteen years he extended his domain over the known world and established himself as the universal emperor. He died at Babylon, his capital city, at the age of thirty-three, having lamented that there were no more worlds for him to conquer. (For the boundaries of his empire, see any map of his time.) Pope spoke of him as "The youth who all things but himself subdued." **Soudan** (l. 149). An obsolete term for Sultan, the Turkish ruler.

153–224. The story of Merlin, King Arthur's court magician, and the enchantress Vivian is one of the most familiar of the Arthurian cycle of legends. **Broce-liande** (l. 156). In Cornwall. See l. 61, Part I. **fay** (l. 159). Fairy. **empire** (l. 184). That is, power; here supernatural power. **wimple** (l. 220). A covering for the head. **Is Merlin prisoner**, etc. (l. 223). Merlin, the magician, is thus entrapped by means of a charm he had himself communicated to his mistress, the enchantress Vivian. Malory has Merlin imprisoned under a rock; Tennyson, in an oak:—

> "And in the hollow oak he lay as dead
> And lost to life and use and name and fame."
>
> —*Merlin and Vivian.*

224. For she was passing weary, etc.

"And she was ever passing weary of him."

—MALORY.

PART I. What is the opening situation in the poem? Why have it a stormy night? What does Tristram's question (l. 7) reveal of his condition physically and mentally? What is the office of the parts of the poem coming between the intervals of conversation? How is the wounded knight identified? How the lady? Follow the wanderings of the sleeping Tristram's mind. Are the incidents he speaks of in the order of their occurrence? Explain ll. 102–103; ll. 161–169. Tell the story of Tristram and Iseult of the White Hands. What is shown by the fact that Tristram's mind dwells on Iseult of Ireland even at the time of battle? How account for his wanderings? For his morose frame of mind? What change has come over nature when Tristram awakes? Why this change? What is his mood now? Account for his addressing Iseult of Brittany as he does. Why his order for her to retire? What is her attitude toward him? Note the manner in which the children are introduced into the story (ll. 324–325). PART II. Give the opening situation. Discuss the meeting of Tristram and Iseult. What is revealed by their conversation? What is the purpose in introducing the Huntsman on the arras? PART III. What is the purpose of ll. 1–4? Give the opening situation in Part III. How is Iseult trying to entertain her children? What kind of a life does she lead? Discuss ll. 112–150 as to meaning and connection with the theme of the poem. Tell the story of Merlin and Vivian. Why introduced? Compare Arnold's version of the story of Tristram and Iseult with the version given in the introductory note to the poem.

THE CHURCH OF BROU (PAGE 63)

I. THE CASTLE

The church of Brou is actually located in a treeless Burgundian plain, and not in the mountains, as stated by the poet.

1. Savoy. A mountainous district in eastern France; formerly one of the divisions of the Sardinian States.

3. mountain-chalets. Properly, herdsmen's huts in the mountains of Switzerland.

17. prickers. Men sent into the thickets to start the game.

35. dais. Here, a canopy or covering.

69. erst. See note, l. 32, *The Scholar-Gipsy.*

71. chancel. The part of a church in which the altar is placed.

72. nave. See note, ll. 70–76, *Epilogue to Lessing's Laocoön.*

77. palmers. Wandering religious votaries, especially those who bore branches of palm as a token that they had visited the Holy Land and its sacred places.

109. fretwork. Representing open woodwork.

II. THE CHURCH

17. matin-chime. Bells for morning worship.

21. Chambery. Capital of the department of Savoy Proper, on the Leysse.

22. Dight. See l. 275, *Sohrab and Rustum.*

37. chisell'd broideries. The carved draperies of the tombs.

III. THE TOMB

6. transept. The transversal part of a church edifice, which crosses at right angles between the nave and the choir (the upper portion), thus giving to the building the form of a cross.

39. foliaged marble forest. Note the epithet.

45. leads. That is, the leaden roof. See l. 1, Part II.

REQUIESCAT (PAGE 70)

This poem, one of Arnold's best-known shorter lyrics, combines with perfect taste, simplicity and elegance, with the truest pathos. It has been said there is not a false note in it.

13. cabin'd. Used in the sense of being cramped for space.

16. vasty. Spacious, boundless.

What is the significance of strewing on the roses? Why "never a spray of yew"? (See note, l. 140, *The Scholar-Gipsy.*) What seems to be the author's attitude toward death? (Read his poem, *A Wish.*) Discuss the poem as to its lyrical qualities.

CONSOLATION (PAGE 71)

14. Holy Lassa (that is, Land of the Divine Intelligence), the capital city of Thibet and residence of the Dalai, or Grand Lama, the pontifical sovereign of Thibet and East Asia. Here is located the great temple of Buddha, a vast square edifice, surmounted by a gilded dome, the temple, together with its precincts, covering an area of many acres. Contiguous to it, on its four sides, are four celebrated monasteries, occupied by four thousand recluses, and resorted to as schools of the Buddhic religion and philosophy. There is, perhaps, no other one place in the world where so much gold is accumulated for superstitious purposes.

17. Muses. See note, l. 121, *The Strayed Reveller.*

18. In their cool gallery. That is, in the Vatican art gallery at Rome.

19. yellow Tiber. So called by the ancients because of the yellowish, muddy appearance of its waters.

21. Strange unloved uproar. At the time this poem was written, — 1849, — the French army was besieging Rome.

23. Helicon. See note, l. 21, *The Strayed Reveller.*

32. Erst. See note, l. 32, *The Scholar-Gipsy.*

48. Destiny. That is, Fate, the goddess of human destiny.

In what mood is the author at the opening of the poem? How does he seek consolation? How does the calm of the Muses affect him? Can you see how he might find help in dwelling on the pictures of the blind beggar and happy lovers? What is the final thought of the poem? Can you think of any other poem that has this as its central thought? What do you think of the author's philosophy of life as set forth in this poem? Discuss the verse form used.

LINES (PAGE 75)

WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

The Kensington Gardens form one of the many beautiful public parks of London. They are located in the Kensington parish, a western suburb of the city, lying north of the Thames and four miles west-southwest of St. Paul's. In his poem Arnold contrasts the serenity of nature with the restlessness of modern life. "Not Lucan, not Vergil, only Wordsworth, has more beautifully expressed the spirit of Pantheism." — HERBERT W. PAUL.

4. The pine trees here mentioned are since dead.

14. What endless active life! Compare with Arnold's sonnet of this volume, entitled *Quiet Work*, ll. 4–7 and 11–12.

21. the huge world. London.

24. Was breathed on by rural Pan. Note Arnold's classic way of accounting for his great love for nature, Pan being the nature god. See note, l. 67, *The Strayed Reveller.*

37–42. Compare the thought here presented with the following lines from Wordsworth: —

> "These beauteous forms,
> . . . have not been to me
> As is a landscape to a blind man's eye.
> But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
> Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
> . . . sensations sweet
> Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
> And passing even into my purer mind,
> With tranquil restoration."

Read also Wordsworth's *Lines to the Daffodil.*

What is the dominant mood of the poem? What evidently brought it to the author's mind? How does he show his interest in nature? In human beings? What inspiration does the author seek from nature, ll. 37–42? Explain the meaning of the last two lines.

THE STRAYED REVELLER (PAGE 77)

"I have such a love for these forms and this old Greek world, that perhaps I infuse a little soul into my dealings with them, which saves me from being entirely *ennuyx*, professorial and pedantic." (Matthew Arnold, in a letter to his sister, dated February, 1858.)

Circe, according to Greek mythology, was an enchantress, who dwelt in the island of Ææa, and who possessed the power to transform men into beasts. (See any mythological text on Ulysses' wanderings.) In Arnold's fantastic, visionary poem, the magic potion, by which this transformation is accomplished, affects not the body, but the mind of the youth.

12. ivy-cinctured. That is, girdled with ivy, symbolic of Bac-

chus, the god of wine and revelry, whose forehead was crowned with ivy. See also l. 33.

36. rout. Consult dictionary.

38. Iacchus. In the Eleusinian mysteries, Bacchus bore the name of Iacchus. **fane.** A temple. From the Latin *fanum*, a place of worship dedicated to any deity.

48. The lions sleeping. As Ulysses' companions approached Circe's palace, following their landing on her island, they found themselves "surrounded by lions, tigers, and wolves, not fierce, but tamed by Circe's art, for she was a powerful magician."

67. Pan's flute music! Pan, the god of pastures and woodlands, was the inventor of the syrinx, or shepherd's flute, with which he accompanied himself and his followers in the dance.

71. Ulysses. The celebrated hero of the Trojan war; also famous for his wanderings. One of his chief adventures, on his return voyage from Troy, was with the enchantress Circe, with whom he tarried a year, forgetful of his faithful wife, Penelope, at home.

72. Art. That is, are you. (Now used only in solemn or poetic style.)

73. range. Wander aimlessly about.

74. See what the day brings. That is, the youth. See ll. 24–52.

81. Nymphs. Goddesses of the mountains, forests, meadows, or waters, belonging to the lower rank of deities.

102–107. Compare in thought with Tennyson's poem, *Ulysses*.

110. The favour'd guest of Circe. Ulysses. See note, l. 71.

120. Muses. Daughters of Jupiter and Minemosyne, nine in number. According to the earliest writers the Muses were only the inspiring goddesses of song; but later they were looked to as the divinities presiding over the different kinds of poetry, and over the arts and sciences.

130–135. Note the poet's device for presenting a series of mental pictures. Compare with Tennyson's plan in his *Palace of Art.* Does Arnold's plan seem more or less mechanical than Tennyson's?

135–142. Tiresias. The blind prophet of **Thebes** (l. 142), the chief city in Bœotia, near the river **Asopus** (l. 138). In his youth, Tiresias unwittingly came upon Athene while she was bathing, and was punished by the loss of sight. As a recompense for this misfortune, the goddess afterward gave him knowledge of future events. The inhabitants of Thebes looked to Tiresias for direction in times of war.

143. Centaurs. Monsters, half man, half horse.

145. Pelion. A mountain in eastern Thessaly, famous in Greek mythology. In the war between the giants and the gods, the former, in their efforts to scale the heavens, piled Ossa upon Olympus and Pelion upon Ossa.

151–161. What in these lines enables you to determine the people and country alluded to?

162–167. Scythian . . . embers. The ancient Greek term for the nomadic tribes inhabiting the whole north and northeast Europe and Asia. As a distinct people they built no cities, and formed no general government, but wandered from place to place by tribes, in their rude, covered carts (see l. 164), living upon the coarsest kind of food (ll. 166–167).

177–180. Clusters of lonely mounds, etc. That is, ruins of ancient cities.

183. Chorasmian stream. See note, l. 878, *Sohrab and Rustum.*

197. milk-barr'd onyx-stones. A reference to the white streaks, or bars, common to the onyx.

206. Happy Islands. Mythical islands lying far to the west, the abode of the heroes after death.

220. Hera's anger. Hera (or Juno), wife to Jupiter, was noted for her violent temper and jealousy. She is here represented as

visiting punishment upon the bard, perhaps out of jealousy of the gods who had endowed him with poetic power, and his life, thus afflicted, seems lengthened to seven ages.

228–229. Lapithæ. In Greek legends, a fierce Thessalian race, governed by Pirothous, a half-brother to the Centaurs. **Theseus.** The chief hero of Attica, who, according to tradition, united the several tribes of Attica into one state, with Athens as the capital. His life was filled with adventure. The reference here is to the time of the marriage of Pirothous and Hippodamia, on which occasion the Centaurs, who were among the guests, became intoxicated, and offered indignities to the bride. In the fight that followed, Theseus joined with the Lapithæ, and many of the Centaurs were slain.

231. Alcmena's dreadful son. Hercules. On his expedition to capture the Arcadian boar, his third labor, Hercules became involved in a broil with the Centaurs, and in self-defence slew several of them with his arrows.

245. Oxus stream. See note, l. 2, *Sohrab and Rustum*.

254. Heroes. The demigods of mythology.

257. Troy. The capital of Troas, Asia Minor; the seat of the Trojan war.

254–260. Shortly after the close of the Trojan war, a party of heroes from all parts of Greece, many of whom had participated in the expeditions against Thebes and Troy, set out under the leadership of Jason to capture the Golden Fleece. Leaving the shores of Thessaly, the adventurers sailed eastward and finally came to the entrance of the Euxine Sea (the **unknown sea**, l. 260), which was guarded by the Clashing Islands. Following the instructions of the sage Phineus, Jason let fly a dove between the islands, and at the moment of rebound the expedition passed safely through. The ship in which the adventurers sailed was called the Argo, after its builder, Argus; hence our term Argonauts.

261. Silenus. A divinity of Asiatic origin ; foster-father to Bacchus and leader of the Fauns (l. 265), satyr-like divinities, half man, half goat. sometimes represented in art as bearing torches (l. 274).

275. Mænad. A bacchante, — a priestess or votary of Bacchus.

276. Faun with torches. See note, l. 261.

What is the situation at the beginning of the poem? What effect does the "liquor" have upon the youth? Why is the presence of Ulysses so much in harmony with the situation? How does he greet Circe ; how the youth? What does his presence suggest to the latter? Why? Note the vividness of the pictures he describes ; also the swiftness with which he changes from one to another. What power is ascribed to the poet? Why his "pain"? What effect is gained by closing the poem with the same words with which it is opened? Why the irregular verse used?

DOVER BEACH (PAGE 88)

In this poem is expressed the peculiar turn of Arnold's mind, at once religious and sceptical, philosophical and emotional. It is one of his most passionate interpretations of life.

15. Sophocles (495–406 B.C.). One of the three great tragic poets of Greece. His rivals were Æschylus (525–456 B.C.) and Euripides (486–406 B.C.).

16. Ægean Sea. See note, l. 236, *The Scholar-Gipsy*.

Image the scene in the opening stanzas. What is the author's mood? Why does he call some one to look on the scene with him? What is the "eternal note of sadness"? Why connect it in thought with the sea? Why does this thought suggest Sophocles? What thought next presents itself to the author's mind? From

what source must one's help and comfort then be drawn? Why so? Why the irregular versification? State the theme of the poem.

PHILOMELA (PAGE 90)

"Philomela unites the sensibilities and intellectual experience of modern Englishmen with the luminousness and simplicity of Greek poetry." — SAINTSBURY.

The myth of the nightingale has long been a favorite with the poets, who have variously interpreted the bird's song. See Coleridge's, Keats's, and Wordsworth's poems on the subject. The most common version of the myth, the one followed by Arnold, is as follows: —

"Pandion (son of Erichthonius, special ward to Minerva) had two daughters, Procne and Philomela, of whom he gave the former in marriage to Tereus, king of Thrace (or of Daulis in Phocis). This ruler, after his wife had borne him a son, Itys (or Itylus), wearied of her, plucked out her tongue by the roots to insure her silence, and, pretending that she was dead, took in marriage the other sister, Philomela. Procne, by means of a web, into which she wove her story, informed Philomela of the horrible truth. In revenge upon Tereus, the sisters killed Itylus, and served up the child as food to the father; but the gods, in indignation, transformed Procne into a swallow, Philomela into a nightingale, forever bemoaning the murdered Itylus, and Tereus into a hawk, forever pursuing the sisters." — GAYLEY'S *Classic Myths*.

4. Use the subjoined questions in studying the poem.

5. O wanderer from a Grecian shore. See note, l. 27.

8. Note the aptness and beauty of the adjectives in this line, not one of which could be omitted without irreparable loss.

18. Thracian wild. Thrace was the name used by the early Greeks for the entire region north of Greece.

21. The too clear web, etc. See introductory note to poem for explanation of this and the following lines.

27. Daulis. A city of Phocis, Greece, twelve miles northeast of Delphi; the scene of the myth of Philomela. **Cephessian vale.** The valley of the Cephissus, a small stream running through Doris, Phocis, and Bœotia, into the Eubœan Gulf.

29. How thick the bursts, etc. Compare with the following lines from Coleridge: —

> "'Tis the merry nightingale
> That crowds and hurries and precipitates
> With fast, thick warble his delicious notes,
> As he were fearful that an April night
> Would be too short for him to utter forth
> His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul
> Of all its music!"
>
> — *The Nightingale.*

Also

> "O Nightingale! thou surely art
> A creature of a 'fiery heart': —
> These notes of thine — they pierce and pierce;
> Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
> Thou sing'st as if the god of wine
> Had helped thee to a Valentine."
>
> — WORDSWORTH.

31–32. Eternal passion!
Eternal pain! Compare: —

> "Thou warblest sad thy pity-pleading strains."
>
> — COLERIDGE, *To a Nightingale.*

and

> "Sweet bird . . .
> Most musical, most melancholy!"
>
> — MILTON, *Il Penseroso.*

Image the scene in the poem. How does the author secure the proper atmosphere for the theme of the poem? Account for the

note of triumph in the nightingale's song; note of pain. What is shown by the poet's question, ll. 10–15? What new qualities are added to the nightingale's song, l. 25? Account for them. Why *eternal* passion, *eternal* pain? Do you feel the form of verse used (Pindaric blank) to be adapted to the theme?

HUMAN LIFE (PAGE 91)

4. kept uninfringed my nature's law. That is, have lived a perfect life.

5. inly-written chart. The conscience.

8. incognisable. Not to be comprehended by finite mind.

23. prore. Poetical word for *prow*, the fore part of a ship.

27. stem. Consult dictionary.

What important incident in the destiny of the soul is alluded to in stanza 1? Interpret ll. 13–14, and apply to your own experience. Why cannot we live "chance's fool"? Is there any hint of fatalism in the poem, or are we held accountable for our own destiny?

ISOLATION (PAGE 92)

TO MARGUERITE, ON RETURNING A VOLUME OF THE LETTERS OF ORTIS

This poem, the fifth in a loosely connected group of lyrics, under the general name *Switzerland*, is a continuation of the preceding poem, *Isolation — to Marguerite*, and is properly entitled, *To Marguerite — Continued*. When printed separately, the above title is used.

Jacopo Ortis was a pseudonym of the Italian poet, Ugo Foscolo. His *Ultime Lettere di Ortis* was translated into the English in 1818.

1. Yes! Used in answer to the closing thought of the preceding poem.

7. moon. Note the frequency with which reference to the moon, with its light effects, appears in Arnold's lines. Can you give any reason for this?

25. Mr. Herbert W. Paul, commenting on this line, says: "*Isolation* winds up with one of the great poetic phrases of the century — one of the 'jewels five (literally five) words long' of English verse — a phrase complete and final, with epithets in unerring cumulation."

Give the poem's theme. To what is each individual likened? Discuss l. 2 as to meaning. In what sense do we live "alone," l. 4? Why "endless bounds," l. 6? How account for the feeling of despair, l. 13? Answer the questions asked in the last stanza. In what frame of mind does the poem leave you?

KAISER DEAD (PAGE 93)

APRIL 6, 1887

Arnold's love for animals, especially his household pets, was most sincere. Despite the playful irony of his poem, there is in the minor key an undertone of genuine sorrow. "We have just lost our dear, dear mongrel, Kaiser," he wrote in a letter dated from his home in Cobham, Kent, April 7, 1887, "and we are very sad." The poem was written the following July, and was published in the *Fortnightly Review* for that month.

2. Cobham. See note above.

3. Farringford, in the Isle of Wight, was the home of Lord Tennyson.

5. Pen-bryn's bold bard. Sir Lewis Morris, author of the *Epic of Hades*, lived at Pen-bryn, in Caermarthanshire.

11–12. In Burns's poem, *Poor Mailie's Elegy*, occur the following lines: —

"Come, join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed."

20. Potsdam. The capital of the government district of Potsdam, in the province of Brandenburg, Prussia; hence the dog's name, *Kaiser*.

41. the Grand Old Man. Gladstone.

50. agog. In a state of eager excitement.

65. Geist. Also remembered in a poem entitled *Geist's Grave*, included in this volume.

76. chiel. A Scotch word meaning lad, fellow.

"Buirdly *chiels* an clever hizzies."
— BURNS, *The Twa Dogs*.

Skye. The largest of the Inner Hebrides. See note, l. 7, *Saint Brandan*.

THE LAST WORD (PAGE 96)

In this poem Arnold describes the plight of one engaged in a hopeless struggle against an uncompromising, Philistine world too strong for him.

State the central thought in the poem. To whom is it addressed? What is the *narrow bed*, l. 1? Why give up the struggle? With whom has it been waged? Explain fully l. 4. What is implied in l. 6? What is meant by *ringing shot*, l. 11? Who are the victors, l. 14? What would they probably say on finding the body near the wall? Can you think of any historical characters of whom the poem might aptly have been written?

PALLADIUM (PAGE 97)

At the time of the Trojan war there was in the citadel of Troy a celebrated statue of Pallas Athene, called the Palladium. It was reputed to have fallen from heaven as the gift of Zeus, and the belief was that the city could not be taken so long as this statue remained within it. Ulysses and Diomedes, two of the Greek champions, succeeded in entering the city in disguise, stole the Palladium and carried it off to the besiegers' camp at Argos. It was some time, however, before the city fell.

1. Simois. A small river of the Troad which takes its rise in the rocky, wooded eminence which, according to Greek tradition, formed the acropolis of Troy. The Palladium was set up on its banks near its source, in a temple especially erected for it (l. 6), and from this lofty position was supposed to watch over the safety of the city and her defenders on the plains below.

3. Hector. Hector, son of Priam, king of Troy (Ilium), and his wife, Hecuba, was the leader and champion of the Trojan armies. He distinguished himself in numerous single combats with the ablest of the Greek heroes; and to him was principally due the stubborn defence of the Trojan capital. He was finally slain by Achilles, aided by Athene, and his body dragged thrice around the walls of Troy behind the chariot of his conqueror.

14. Xanthus. The Scamander, the largest and most celebrated river of the Troad, near which Troy was situated, was presided over by a deity known to the gods as Xanthus. His contest with Achilles, whom he so nearly overwhelmed, forms a notable incident of the *Iliad*.

15. Ajax, or Aiax. One of the leading Greek heroes in the siege of Troy, famous for his size, physical strength, and beauty. In bravery and feats of valor he was second only to Achilles. Not

being awarded the armor of Achilles after that hero's death, he slew himself.

16. Helen, the wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta, was celebrated for her beauty, by reason of which frequent references are made to her by both classic and modern writers. Goethe introduces her in the second part of *Faust*, and Faustus, in Marlowe's play of that name, addresses her thus: —

> "Oh! thou art fairer than the evening air
> Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars."

Her abduction by Paris, son of Priam (see note, l. 3), was the cause of the Trojan war, the most notable incident of Greek mythology, which forms the theme of Homer's greatest poem, the *Iliad*.

What is the central thought of the poem? Of what is the Palladium typical? Explain the thought in stanza 3. What is the force of the references of stanza 4? Discuss the use of the words "rust" and "shine," l. 17. Just what is meant by "soul" as the word is used in the poem?

SELF-DEPENDENCE (PAGE 99)

Self-Dependence is a poem in every respect characteristic of its author. In it Arnold exhorts mankind to seek refuge from human troubles in the example of nature.

Picture the situation in the poem. What is the poet's mood as shown in the opening stanzas? From what source does he seek aid? Why? What answer does he receive? What is the source of nature's repose? Where and how must the human soul find its contentment?

GEIST'S GRAVE (PAGE 103)

This poem appeared in the January number of the *Fortnightly Review* for 1881.

12. homily. Sermon.

15. the Virgilian cry. *Sunt lacrimæ rerum!* These words are interpreted in the following line.

42. On lips that rarely form them now. Arnold wrote but little poetry after 1867.

55–56. thine absent master. Richard Penrose Arnold, the poet's only surviving son.

EPILOGUE TO LESSING'S LAOCOÖN (PAGE 106)

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781) was a celebrated German dramatist and critic. For a time he studied theology at Leipsic, then turned his attention to the stage, and later to criticism. His greatest critical work (1766) is a treatise on Art, the famous Greek statuary group, the Laocoön, which gives the work its name, forming the basis for a comparative discussion of Sculpture, Poetry, Painting, and Music.

1. Hyde Park. The largest park in London, and the principal recreation ground of that city.

15. Phœbus-guarded ground. Greece. **Phœbus**, a name often given Apollo, the sun god.

16. Pausanias. A noted Greek geographer and writer on art who lived in the second century. "His work, *The Gazetteer of Hellas*, is our best repertory of information for the topography, local history, religious observances, architecture, and sculpture of the different states of Greece." — K. O. MÜLLER, *History of the Literature of Ancient Greece.*

21–22. Dante (1265–1321), **Petrarch** (1304–1374), **Tasso** (1544–1595), **Ariosto** (1475–1533). Celebrated Italian poets.

25. Raphael (1483–1520). The famous Italian painter.

29. Goethe (1749–1832). The greatest name in German literature. His works include poetry, dramas, and criticisms. **Wordsworth** (1770–1850). See the poem, *Memorial Verses*, of this volume.

35. Mozart (1756–1791), **Beethoven** (1770–1827), **Mendelssohn** (1809–1847). Noted musicians and composers.

42. south. Warm.

43–48. Cyclops Polyphemus, famous in the story of Ulysses, was a persistent and jealous suitor of Galatea, the fairest of sea divinities. So ardent was he in his wooings, that he would leave his flocks to wander at will, while he sang his uncouth lays from the hilltops to Galatea in the bay below. Her only answers were words of scorn and mockery. See Andrew Lang's translation of Theocritus, Idyl VI, for further account.

70–76. Abbey towers. That is, Westminster Abbey, a mile's distance to the south and east of Hyde Park. The abbey is built in the form of a cross, the body or lower part of which is termed the nave (l. 73). The upper portion is occupied by the choir, the anthems of which, with their organ accompaniments, are alluded to in ll. 74–77.

89–106. Miserere Domine! *Lord, have mercy!* These words are from the service of the Church of England. The meaning in these lines is that Beethoven, in his masterpieces, has transferred the thoughts and feelings, above inadequately expressed in words, into another and more emotional tongue ; that is, music.

107. Ride. A famous driveway in Hyde Park, commonly called Rotten Row.

119. vacant. Thoughtless ; not occupied with study or reflection.

> "For oft, when on my couch I lie
> In *vacant* or in pensive mood."
> —WORDSWORTH'S *Lines to the Daffodils*, ll. 19–20.

124. hies. Hastens (poetical).

130. painter and musician too! Arnold held poetry to be equal to painting and music combined.

140. movement. Activities. Explained in the following lines.

163–210. Note carefully the argument used to prove that poetry interprets life more accurately and effectively than any of the other arts. **Homer**, the most renowned of all Greek poets. The time in which he lived is not definitely known. **Shakespeare** (1564–1616).

Give the setting of the story. What was the topic of conversation? What stand did the poet's friend take regarding poetry? Why turn to Greece in considering the arts? What limitations of the painter's art are pointed out by the poet? What is his attitude toward music? What finally is "the poet's sphere," l. 127? Wherein then is poetry superior to the other arts? Does the author prove his point by his poem? Discuss the poem as to movement, diction, etc.

QUIET WORK (PAGE 115)

No poet, not even Wordsworth, was more passionately fond of nature than Arnold. Note his attitude in the poem.

1. One lesson. What lesson?

4. Discuss the use of the adjective "loud"; also "noisier," l. 7.

Note the essential elements of sonnet structure in metre, rhyme formula, and number of lines. See the introduction to Sharp's *Sonnets of this Century*.

SHAKESPEARE (PAGE 115)

Despite this tribute, Arnold considered Homer Shakespeare's equal, if not his superior.

What do Shakespeare's smile and silence imply on his part? Explain in full the figure used. Do you consider it apt? Why "Better so," l. 10? What is there in the poem that helps you to see wherein lay Shakespeare's power to interpret life? Select the lines which most impress you, and tell why.

YOUTH'S AGITATIONS (PAGE 116)

This sonnet was written in 1852, when the poet was in his thirtieth year.

5. joy. Be glad. **heats.** Passions.

6. even clime. That is, in the less emotional years of maturity.

12. hurrying fever. See note, l. 5.

AUSTERITY OF POETRY (PAGE 117)

1. That son of Italy. Giacopone di Todi.

2. Dante (1265–1321). Best known as the author of *The Divine Comedy.*

3. In his light youth. Explain.

11. sackcloth. Symbolic of mourning or mortification of the flesh.

Tell the story of the poem and make the application. Explain Arnold's idea of poetry as set forth in ll. 12–14.

WORLDLY PLACE (PAGE 117)

3. Marcus Aurelius (121–180 A.D.), commonly called "the philosopher." A celebrated Roman emperor, prominent among the ethical teachers of his time. Arnold himself has been aptly

styled by Sharp an "impassioned Marcus Aurelius, wrought by poetic vision and emotion to poetic music."

6. foolish. In the sense of unreasonable. **ken.** The Scotch word meaning sight.

7. rates. Berates, reproves.

Give the poem's theme. What is implied by the word "even," l. 1? Does the author agree with the implication? Why so? Discuss l. 5 as to its meaning. Interpret the expressions "ill-school'd spirit," l. 11, and "Some nobler, ampler stage of life," l. 12. Where finally are the aids to a nobler life to be found? Do you agree with this philosophy of life?

EAST LONDON (PAGE 118)

2. Bethnal Green. An eastern suburb of London.

4. Spitalfields. A part of northeast London, comprising the parishes of Bethnal Green and Christchurch.

Image the scene. What is the purpose of the first four lines? Discuss l. 6. What is the import of the preacher's response? What are the poet's conclusions drawn in ll. 9–14?

WEST LONDON (PAGE 119)

1. Belgrave Square. An important square in the western part of London.

Tell the situation and the story of the poem. Why did the woman solicit aid from the laboring men? Why not from the wealthy? Explain ll. 9–11. What is the poet's final conclusion?

MEMORIAL VERSES (PAGE 121)

APRIL, 1850

Wordsworth died at Rydal Mount, in the Lake District, April 23, 1850. These verses, dedicated to his memory, are among Arnold's best-known lines. For adequacy of meaning and charm of expression, they are almost unsurpassed; they also contain some of the poet's soundest poetical criticism. The poem was first published in *Fraser's Magazine* for June, 1850, and bore the date of April 27.

1. **Goethe in Weimar sleeps.** The tomb of Goethe, the celebrated German author (see note, l. 30, *Epilogue to Lessing's Laocoön*), is in Weimar, the capital of the Grand-duchy of Saxe-Weimar. Weimar is noted as the literary centre of Germany, and for this reason is styled the German Athens.

2. **Byron.** George Gordon Byron (1788–1824), a celebrated English poet of the French Revolutionary period, died at Missolonghi, Greece, where he had gone to help the Greeks in their struggle to throw off the Turkish yoke. He was preëminently a poet of passion, and, as such, exerted a marked influence on the literature of his day. His petulant, bitter rebellion against all law has become proverbial; hence the term "Byronic." The **Titans** (l. 14) were a race of giants who warred against the gods. The aptness of the comparison made here is at once evident. In Arnold's sonnet, *A Picture at Newstead*, also occur these lines: —

> "'Twas not the thought of Byron, of his cry
> Stormily sweet, his Titan-agony."

17. **iron age.** In classic mythology, "The last of the four great ages of the world described by Hesiod, Ovid, etc. It was supposed to be characterized by abounding oppression, vice, and misery." —

International Dictionary. The preceding ages, in order, were the age of gold, the age of silver, and the age of brass.

34–39. Eurydice, wife of Orpheus, was stung to death by a serpent, and passed to the realm of the dead — Hades. Thither Orpheus descended, and, by the charm of his lyre and song, persuaded Pluto to restore her to life. This he consented to do on condition that she walk behind her husband, who was not to look at her until they had arrived in the upper world. Orpheus, however, looked back, thus violating the conditions, and Eurydice was caught back into the infernal regions.

"The ferry guard
Now would not row him o'er the lake again."

—LANDOR.

72. Rotha. A small stream of the English Lake Region, on which Rydal Mount, Wordsworth's burial-place, is situated.

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY (PAGE 123)

"There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gipsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtilty of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gipsies, and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others; that himself had learned

much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned." — GLANVIL'S *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, 1661.

2. wattled cotes. Sheepfolds. Probably suggested by Milton's *Comus*, l. 344 : —

"The folded flocks, penned in their *wattled cotes.*

9. Cross and recross. Infinitives depending upon **seen**, l. 8.

13. cruse. Commonly associated in thought with the story of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath, 1 *Kings*, xvii: 8–16.

19. corn. See note, l. 156, *Sohrab and Rustum.*

30. Oxford towers. "Oxford, the county town of Oxfordshire and the seat of one of the most ancient and celebrated universities in Europe, is situated amid picturesque environs at the confluence of the Cherwell and the Thames (often called in its upper course the Isis). It is surrounded by an amphitheatre of gentle hills, the tops of which command a fine view of the city with its domes and towers." — BAEDEKER'S *Great Britain*, in his *Handbooks for Travellers.* In writing of Oxford, Hawthorne says: "The world, surely, has not another place like Oxford ; it is a despair to see such a place and ever to leave it, for it would take a lifetime, and more than one, to comprehend and enjoy it satisfactorily." See also note, l. 19, *Thyrsis.*

31. Glanvil's book. See introductory note to poem.

42. erst. Formerly. (Obsolete except in poetry.)

44–50. See introductory note to poem.

57. Hurst. Cumner (or Cumnor) Hurst, one of the Cumnor range of hills, some two or three miles south and west of Oxford, is crowned with a clump of cedars ; hence the name "Hurst."

58. Berkshire moors. Berkshire is the county, or shire, on the south of Oxford County.

69. green-muffled. Explain the epithet.

74. Bablockhithe. A small town some four miles west and a little south of Oxford, on the Thames, which at that point is a mere stream crossed by a ferry. This and numerous other points of interest in the vicinity of Oxford are frequented by Oxford students; hence Arnold's familiarity with them and his reference to them in this poem and *Thyrsis*. See any atlas.

79. Wychwood bowers. That is, Wychwood Forest, ten or twelve miles north and west of Oxford. See note, l. 74.

83. To dance around the Fyfield elm in May. Fyfield, a parish in Berkshire, about six miles southwest of Oxford. The reference here is to the "May-day" celebrations formerly widely observed in Europe, but now nearly disappeared. The chief features of the celebration in Great Britain are the gathering of hawthorn blossoms and other flowers, the crowning of the May-queen and dancing around the May-pole — here the Fyfield elm. See note, l. 74. Read Tennyson's poem, *The Queen o' the May*.

91. Godstow Bridge. Some two miles up the Thames from Oxford.

95. lasher pass. An English term corresponding to our *mill race*. The *lasher* is the dam, or weir.

98. outlandish. Analyze the word and determine meaning.

111. Bagley Wood. South and west of Oxford, beyond South Hinksey. See note, l. 125; also note, l. 74.

114. tagg'd. That is, marked; the leaves being colored by frost.

115. Thessaly. The northeastern district of ancient Greece, celebrated in mythology. Here a forest ground near Bagley Wood. See note, l. 111; also note, l. 74.

125. Hinksey. North and South Hinksey are unimportant villages a short distance out from Oxford in the Cumnor Hills. See note, l. 74.

129. Christ Church hall. The largest and most fashionable col-

lege in Oxford; founded by Cardinal Wolsey in 1525. The chapel of Christ Church is also the cathedral of the diocese of Oxford.

130. grange. Consult dictionary.

133. Glanvil. Joseph Glanvil, 1636–1680. A noted English divine and philosopher; author of a defence of belief in witchcraft.

140. red-fruited yew tree. The yew tree is very common in English burial-grounds. It grows slowly, lives long, has a dark, thick foliage, and yields a red berry. See Wordsworth's celebrated poem, *The Yew-Tree.*

141–170. "This note of lassitude is struck often — perhaps too often — in Arnold's poems." — DU PONT SYLE. See also *The Stanzas in Memory of the Author of Obermann.* For the author's less despondent mood, see his *Rugby Chapel*, included in this volume.

147. teen. Grief, sorrow; from the old English *teona*, meaning injury.

149. the just-pausing Genius. Does the author here allude to death?

151. Thou hast not lived (so). That is, as described in preceding stanza.

152. Thou hadst one aim, etc. What was the Scholar-Gipsy's *one* motive in life?

157–160. But thou possessest an immortal lot, etc. Explain.

165. Which much to have tried, etc. Which many attempts and many failures bring.

180. do not we . . . await it too? That is, the spark from heaven. See l. 171.

182–190. Possibly Carlyle, although the author may have had in mind a type rather than an individual.

208–209. Averse, as Dido did, etc. Dido, the mythical queen of Carthage, being deserted by her lover Æneas, slew herself. She afterward met him on his journey through Hades, but turned from him in scorn.

"In vain he thus attempts her mind to move
With tears and prayers and late repenting love;
Disdainfully she looked, then turning round
But fixed her eyes unmoved upon the ground,
And what he says and swears regards no more
Than the deaf rocks when the loud billows roar."
—DRYDEN'S *Translation*.

For entire episode, see *Æneid*, vi, 450–476.

212. inviolable shade. Holy, sacred, not susceptible to corruption. Perhaps no other of Arnold's lines is so much quoted as this and the preceding line.

214. Why "silver'd" branches?

220. dingles. Wooded dells.

231–250. Note the force of this elaborate and exquisitely sustained image; how the mind is carried back from these turbid days of sick unrest to the clear dawn of a fresh and healthy civilization. In the course of an essay on Arnold, the late Mr. Richard Holt Hutton says of this poem and this closing picture: "That most beautiful and graceful poem on the *Scholar-Gipsy* (the Oxford student who is said to have forsaken academic study in order to learn, if it might be, those potent secrets of nature, the traditions of which the gypsies are supposed sedulously to guard) ends in a digression of the most vivid beauty. . . . Nothing could illustrate better than this [closing] passage Arnold's genius and his art. . . . His whole drift having been that care and effort and gain and pressure of the world are sapping human strength, he ends with a picture of the old-world pride and daring, which exhibits human strength in its freshness and vigor. . . . I could quote poem after poem which Arnold closes by some such buoyant digression: a buoyant digression intended to shake off the tone of melancholy, and to remind us that the world of imaginative life is still wide open to us. . . . This problem is insoluble, he seems to

say, but insoluble or not, let us recall the pristine force of the human spirit, and not forget that we have access to great resources still. . . . Arnold, exquisite as his poetry is, teaches us first to feel, and then to put by, the cloud of mortal destiny. But he does not teach us, as Wordsworth does, to bear it."

232. As some grave Tyrian trader, etc. Tyre, the second oldest and most important city of Phœnicia, was, in ancient times, a strong competitor for the commercial supremacy of the Mediterranean.

236. Ægean Isles. The Ægean Sea, that part of the Mediterranean lying between Greece on the west, European Turkey on the north, and Asia Minor on the east, is dotted with numerous small islands, many of which are famous in Greek mythology.

238. Chian wine. Chios, or Scio, an island in the Ægean Sea (see note above), was formerly celebrated for its wine and figs.

239. tunnies. A fish belonging to the mackerel family ; found in the Mediterranean Sea.

244. Midland waters. The Mediterranean Sea.

245. Syrtes. The ancient name of Gulf of Sidra, off North Africa, the chief arm of the Mediterranean on the south. **soft Sicily.** Sicily is noted for its delightful climate ; hence the term, "soft Sicily."

247. western straits. Strait of Gibraltar.

250. Iberians. Inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula, formed by Portugal and Spain.

What atmosphere is given the poem by the first stanza ? What quest is to be begun, l. 10 ? What caused the "Scholar" to join himself to the gipsies ? What were his original intentions ? Why, then, did he continue with them till his death ? Why would he avoid others than members of the gipsy crew ? Why his pensive air ? To what truth does the author suddenly awake ? How does the Scholar-Gipsy yet live to him ? Explain fully lines 180–200.

Note carefully the author's contrast between the life led by the Scholar-Gipsy and our modern life. Which is better? Why? Make an application of the figure of the Tyrian trader. Is it apt? Why used by the poet? Discuss the verse form used. Is it adapted to the theme of the poem?

THYRSIS (PAGE 132)

A monody to commemorate the author's friend, Arthur Hugh Clough, who died at Florence, 1861.

Throughout this poem there is reference to the preceding selection, *The Scholar-Gipsy*, of which it is the companion piece, and, in a sense, the sequel. It is one of the four great elegies in the English language.

Thyrsis is a name common to both ancient and modern literature. In the Idyls of Theocritus it is used as the name of a herdsman; in the Eclogues of Vergil, of a shepherd; while in later writings it has come to mean any rustic.

Arthur Hugh Clough (1819–1861), whose poetry is closely akin in spirit to Arnold's, was a young man of genius and promise. He studied at both Rugby and Oxford, where he and Arnold were intimately associated and became fast friends. In 1859 his health began to fail, and two years later he died in Florence, Italy, where he had gone in the hope of being benefited by the climate.

Arnold, in a letter to his mother dated April, 1866, says of his poem: "Tell dear old Edward [Arnold] that the diction of the Thyrsis was modelled on that of Theocritus, whom I have been much reading during the two years this poem has been forming itself, and that I meant the diction to be so artless as to be almost heedless. However, there is a mean which must not be passed, and before I reprint this I will consider well all objections. The images are all from actual observation. . . . The cuckoo in the

wet June morning, I heard in the garden at Woodford, and all those three stanzas, which you like, are reminiscences of Woodford. Edward has, I think, fixed on the two stanzas I myself like best: 'O easy access,' and 'And long the way appears.' I also like 'Where is the girl,' and the stanza before it; but that is because they bring certain places and moments before me. . . . It is probably too quiet a poem for the general taste, but I think it will stand wear." To his friend, John Campbell Shairp, Arnold wrote, a few days later: "Thyrsis is a very quiet poem, but, I think, solid and sincere. It will not be popular, however. It had long been in my head to connect Clough with that Cumner country, and, when I began, I was carried irresistibly into this form. You say, truly, that there was much in Clough (the whole prophetic side, in fact) which one cannot deal with in this way. . . . Still, Clough had the idyllic side, too; to deal with this suited my desire to deal again with that Cumner country. Anyway, only so could I treat the matter this time. *Valeat quantum.*"

1. Note how the tone of the poem is struck in the first line.

2. **In the two Hinkseys.** That is, North and South Hinksey. See note, l. 125, *The Scholar-Gipsy.*

4. **Sibylla's name.** In ancient mythology the Sibyls were certain women reputed to possess special powers of prophecy, or divination, and who claimed to make special intercession with the gods in behalf of those who resorted to them. Do you see why their "name" would be used on signs as here mentioned?

6. **ye hills.** See note, l. 30, *The Scholar-Gipsy.*

14. **Ilsley Downs.** The surface of East and West Ilsley parishes, in Berkshire, some twelve or fourteen miles south of Oxford, is broken by ranges of plateau-like hills, known in England as *downs.*

15. **The Vale.** White Horse Vale; the upper valley of the River Ock, westward from Oxford. **weirs.** See note, l. 95, *The Scholar-Gipsy.*

19. And that sweet city with her dreaming spires. Arnold's intense love for Oxford and the surrounding country appears in many of his essays and poems. In the introduction to his *Essays on Criticism*, Vol. I, occurs the following tribute: "Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene!

"'There are our young barbarians all at play!'

And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her garments to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantment of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection — to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side? . . . Home of lost causes and forsaken beliefs and unpopular names and impossible loyalties! what example could ever so inspire us to keep down the Philistine in ourselves, what teacher could ever so save us from that bondage to which we are all prone, that bondage which Goethe, in his incomparable lines on the death of Schiller, makes it his friend's highest praise . . . to have left miles out of sight behind him: the bondage of 'was uns alle bändigt, Das Gemeine'?"

20. Compare with Lowell's lines on June, in *The Vision of Sir Launfal*.

22–23. Explain.

24. Once pass'd I blindfold here. That is, at one time I could have passed here blindfolded, being so familiar with the country. Can you think of any other possible interpretation?

26–30. Explain.

31–40. Compare the thought here to that of Milton's *Lycidas*, ll. 23–38. A comparison of the two poems entire, in thought and structure, will be found to be both interesting and profitable. **Shepherd-pipe** (l. 35). The term **pipe**, also **reed** (l. 78), is

continually used in pastoral verse as symbolic of poetry and song.

38–45. Needs must I lose them, etc. That is, I must lose them, etc. Arnold's great ambition was to devote his life to literature, which circumstances largely prevented; while Clough was eager to take a more active part in life, not being content with the uneventful career of a poet. **irk'd** (l. 40). Annoyed; worried. **keep** (l. 43). Here used in the sense of remain. **silly** (l. 45). Harmless; senseless. The word has an interesting history.

46–50. Like Arnold, Clough held lofty ideals of life, and grieved to see men living so far below their privileges. This, with his loss of faith in God, tinged his poetry with sadness. The **storms** (l. 49) allude to the spiritual, political, and social unrest of the last of the first half, and first of the last half, of the nineteenth century.

51–60. So . . . So . . . . Just as the cuckoo departs with the bloom of the year, so he (Clough) went, l. 48. **With blossoms red and white** (l. 55). The white thorn, or hawthorn, very common in English gardens.

62. high Midsummer pomps. Explained in the following lines.

71. light comer. That is, the cuckoo. Compare

> "O blithe New-comer."
> —WORDSWORTH, *Lines to the Cuckoo.*"

77. swains. Consult dictionary.

78. reed. See note, l. 35 of poem.

79. And blow a strain the world at last shall heed. On the whole, Clough's poetry was either ignored or harshly criticised by the reviewers.

80. Corydon. In the Idyls of Theocritus, Corydon and Thyrsis, shepherd swains, compete for a prize in music.

84. Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate. Bion of Smyrna, Asia Minor, a celebrated bucolic poet of the second century B.C., spent

the later years of his life in Sicily, where it is supposed he was poisoned. His untimely death was lamented by his follower and pupil, Moschus of Syracuse, in an idyl marked by melody and genuine pathos. **ditty.** In a general sense, any song; usually confined, however, to a song narrating some heroic deed.

85. cross the unpermitted ferry's flow. That is, cross the river of Woe, over which Charon ferried the shades of the dead to Hades. Mythology records several instances, however, of the ferry being passed by mortals. See note, ll. 34–39, *Memorial Verses;* also ll. 207–210, *The Scholar-Gipsy*, of this volume.

88–89. Proserpine, wife to Pluto (l. 86) and queen of the underworld, was anciently honored, with flower festivals in Sicily, as the goddess of the spring.

90. And flute his friend like Orpheus, etc. See note, ll. 34–39, *Memorial Verses.*

94. She knew the Dorian water's gush divine. The river Alpheus, in the northwestern part of the Peloponnesus — the country of the Dorians — disappears from the surface and flows in subterranean channels for some considerable part of its course to the sea. In ancient Greek mythology it was reputed to rise again to the surface in central Sicily, in the vale of Enna, the favorite haunt of Proserpine, as the fountain of Arethusa.

95–96. She knew each lily white which Enna yields, etc. According to Greek mythology, Proserpine was gathering flowers in the vale of Enna when carried off by Pluto.

97. She loved the Dorian pipe, etc. What reason or reasons can you give for Proserpine's love of things Dorian ?

106. I know the Fyfield tree. See l. 83, *The Scholar-Gipsy.*

109. Ensham, Sanford. Small towns on the Thames; the former, some four miles above Oxford; the latter, a like distance below.

123. Wytham flats. Some three miles above Oxford, along the Thames.

135. sprent. Sprinkled. The preterit or past participle of *spreng* (obsolete or archaic).

141–150. Explain.

155. Berkshire. See note, l. 58, *The Scholar-Gipsy*.

167. Arno-vale. The valley of the Arno, a river in Tuscany, Italy, on which Florence is situated.

175. To a boon . . . country he has fled. That is, to Italy.

177. the great Mother. Ceres, the earth goddess.

181–190. Daphnis, the ideal Sicilian shepherd of Greek pastoral poetry, was said to have followed into Phrygia his mistress Piplea, who had been carried off by robbers, and to have found her in the power of the king of Phrygia, Lityerses. Lityerses used to make strangers try a contest with him in reaping corn, and to put them to death if he overcame them. Hercules arrived in time to save Daphnis, took upon himself the reaping contest with Lityerses, overcame him, and slew him. The Lityerses-song connected with this tradition was, like the Linus-song, one of the early, plaintive strains of Greek popular poetry, and used to be sung by the corn reapers. Other traditions represented Daphnis as beloved by a nymph, who exacted from him an oath to love no one else. He fell in love with a princess, and was struck blind by the jealous nymph. Mercury, who was his father, raised him to heaven, and made a fountain spring up in the place from which he ascended. At this fountain the Sicilians offered yearly sacrifices. See Servius, *Comment. in Vergil. Bucol.*, V, 20, and VIII, 68.

191–200. Explain the lines. **Sole** (l. 192). See l. 563, *Sohrab and Rustum*. **soft sheep** (l. 198). Note the use of the adjective *soft*. Cf. *soft Sicily*, l. 245, *The Scholar-Gipsy*.

201–202. A fugitive and gracious light, etc. What is the light sought by the Scholar-Gipsy and by the poet? Beginning with l. 201, explain the succeeding stanzas, sentence by sentence, to the close of the poem. Then sum up the thought in a few words.

What is the author's mood, as shown by the first stanza? What is his purpose in recalling the haunts once familiar to him about Oxford? Why the mention of the Scholar-Gipsy? What is the significance of the "tree" so frequently alluded to in the poem? Discuss stanzas 4 and 5 as to meaning. To what is Thyrsis (Clough) likened in stanzas 6, 7, and 8? Where, however, is there a difference? Apply ll. 81–84 to Clough and Arnold. How do you explain the "easy access" of the Dorian shepherds to Proserpine, l. 91? What digression is made in ll. 131–150? What is the poet's attitude toward life? Why will he not despair so long as the "lonely tree" remains? What comparison does he make between Clough and the Scholar-Gipsy? What is the "gracious light," l. 201? Where found? What voice whispers to him amid the "heart-wearying roar" of the city? What effect does it have upon him? Does it give him courage or fortitude? Discuss the verse form and diction of the poem.

RUGBY CHAPEL (PAGE 140)

Rugby Chapel (1857), one of Arnold's best-known and most characteristic productions, was written in memory of his father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, famous as the great head-master at Rugby. Dr. Arnold was born at East Cowes in the Isle of Wight, June 13, 1795, and as a boy was at school at Warminster and Winchester. In 1811 he entered Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and having won recognition as a scholar, was awarded a fellowship of the Oriel in 1815. Three years later he settled at Laleham, where, in 1820, he married Mary Penrose, daughter of Justice Penrose, and where, two years later, was born Matthew, who was destined to win marked distinction among English men of letters. In 1827 he was elected head-master at Rugby, and shortly afterward began those

important reforms which have placed him among the greatest educators of his century. Chief among his writings is his *History of Rome*, published in several volumes. In 1841 he was appointed Regius Professor of History at Oxford. He died very suddenly on Sunday, June 12, 1842, and on the following Friday his remains were interred in the chancel of Rugby Chapel, immediately under the communion table.

In his poem Arnold has drawn a vivid picture of a strong, helpful, hopeful, unselfish soul, cheering and supporting his weaker comrades in their upward and onward march — a picture of the guide and companion of his earlier years; and in so doing he has preserved his father's memory to posterity in a striking and an abiding way.

1–13. Note carefully the tone of these introductory lines, and determine the poet's purpose in opening the poem in this mood. The picture inevitably calls to mind Bryant's lines, *The Death of the Flowers.*

16. gloom. The key-word to the preceding lines. Explain why it calls to mind the poet's father. Keats makes a similar use of the word *forlorn* in his *Ode to the Nightingale.*

> ". . . forlorn.
> Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
> To toll me back from thee to my sole self."

30–33. Discuss the figure as to its aptness.

37. shore. A word common to hymns.

38–57. Discuss the poet's idea of the future life as set forth in these lines. Can you think of any other author or authors who have held a like view?

58–59. The poet asks this question only to answer it in the lines following. Compare and contrast the two classes of men spoken of; their aims in life and their achievements. Why is the path of

those who have chosen a "clear-purposed goal" pictured so difficult? Who are they that start well, but fall out by the wayside?

90–93. Compare with Byron's description of a storm in the Alps, Canto III, *Childe Harold.*

> "Far along,
> From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
> Leaps the live thunder."

98–101. So unstable is the hold of the "snow-beds" on the mountain sides that travellers passing beneath them are forbidden by the guides to speak, lest their voices precipitate an avalanche. See ll. 160–169, *Sohrab and Rustum.*

117–123. What human frailties are indicated in the answer to the host's question? Note the contrast in the succeeding lines.

124–144. The imagery of these lines is drawn from Dr. Arnold's life at Rugby. Under his care frequent excursions were made into the neighboring Westmoreland Hills. Nothing perhaps gives a better idea of the man than the description of his "delight in those long mountain walks, when they would start with their provisions for the day, himself the guide and life of the party, always on the lookout how best to break the ascent by gentle stages, comforting the little ones in their falls and helping forward those who were tired, himself always keeping with the laggers, that none might strain their strength by trying to be in front with him; and then, when his assistance was not wanted, the liveliest of all — his step so light, his eye so quick in finding flowers to take home to those who were not of the party." — ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY.

171. In the rocks. That is, among the rocks.

190. Ye. Antecedent?

208. City of God.

"There is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the *city of God.*"

— *Psalms*, xlvi: 4.

INDEX TO NOTES

Abbey towers, 192.
Ader-baijan, 156.
Ægean Isles, 202.
Afrasiab, 156.
Agog, 188.
Ajax, 189.
Alcmena's dreadful son, 182.
All red . . . bathed in foam, 170.
Aloof he sits, etc., 159.
And that . . . more, 169.
Ariosto, 192.
Arno-vale, 208.
Art, 180.
Arthur's court, 169.
Art thou not Rustum? 160.
Asopus, 181.
As some grave Tyrian trader, etc., 202.
As when some hunter, etc., 162.
At my boy's years, 156.
Attruck, 158.
Austerity of Poetry, 194.
Averse, as Dido did, etc., 200.

Bablockhithe, 199.
Bagley Wood, 199.
Bahrein, 160.
Beethoven, 192.
Be govern'd, 160.
Belgrave Square, 195.
Bell, 166.
Berkshire moors, 198.
Bethnal Green, 195.
Blessed sign, 171.
Blow a strain the world at last shall heed, 206.
Bokhara, 157.
Bow'd his head, 161.
Breathed on by rural Pan, 178.
Broce-liande, 174.
Bruited up, 162.
Byron, 196.
By thy father's head, 160.

Cabin'd, 177.
Cabool, 159.
Caked the sand, 163.
Casbin, 157.
Centaurs, 181.
Chambery, 176.
Chancel, 176.
Chatelaine, 170.
Chian wine, 202.
Chiel, 188.
Chisell'd broideries, 176.
Chorasma, 163.
Chorasmian stream, 181.
Christ Church hall, 199.
Cirque, 172.
City of God, 211.
Clusters of lonely mounds, 181.
Cobham, 187.

Common chance, 156.
Common fight, 156.
Consolation, 177.
Cool gallery, 177.
Corn, 158.
Corselet, 162.
Corydon, 206.
Crest, 161.
Cross and recross, 198.
Cross the unpermitted ferry's flow, 207.
Cruse, 198.
Cunning, 162.
Curdled, 161.

Dais, 176.
Dance around the Fyfield elm in May, 199.
Dante, 192.
Daphnis, 208.
Daulis, 185.
Dearer to the red jackals, etc., 162.
Destiny, 178.
Device, 160.
Dight, 160.
Dingles, 201.
Ditty, 207.
Dogg'd, 172.
Do not we . . . await it too? 200.
Dover Beach, 183.

East London, 195.
Empire, 174.
Ensham, 207.
Epilogue to Lessing's Laocoön, 191.
Erst, 198.
Eternal passion! eternal pain! 185.
Eurydice, 197.
Even clime, 194.

Falcon, 159.
Fane, 180.
Farringford, 187.
Faun with torches, 183.
Favour'd guest of Circe, 180.
Fay, 170.
Fay, 174.
Fell-fare, 173.
Ferghana, 158.
Ferment the milk of mares, 157.
Fight unknown and in plain arms, 159.
Find a father thou hast never seen, 156.
First grey of morning fill'd the east, 155.
Fix'd, 158.
Flowers, 160.
Flute his friend, like Orpheus, etc., 207.
Foliaged marble forest, 177.
Foolish, 195.
For a cloud, etc., 161.
Fretwork, 176.
Frore, 157.
Fugitive and gracious light, etc., 208.
Full struck, 161.

Geist, 188.
Geist's Grave, 191.
Girl's wiles, 161.
Glad, 161.
Glancing, 161.
Glanvil, 200.
Glanvil's book, 198.
Glass, 162.
Gloom, 210.
Godstow Bridge, 199.

Goethe, 192.
Goethe in Weimar sleeps, 196.
Go to! 159.
Grand Old Man, 188.
Grange, 200.
Great Mother, 208.
Green isle, 169.
Green-muffled, 199.
Griffin, 162.
Gulls, 173.

Hair that red, 164.
Haman, 157.
Happy Islands, 181.
Hark . . . sun, 166.
Have found, 162.
Heap a stately mound, etc., 163.
Heaths starr'd with broom, 166.
Heats, 194.
Hebrides, 164.
Hector, 189.
Helen, 190.
Helm, 161.
Helmund, 163.
Hera's anger, 181.
Heroes, 182.
He spoke . . . men, 159.
Hies, 193.
High Midsummer pomps, 206.
Hinksey, 199.
His long rambles . . . ground, 170.
Hollow, 161.
Holly trees and juniper, 172.
Holy Lassa, 177.
Holy well, 166.
Homer, 193.
Homily, 191.
Honied nothings, 172.
How thick the bursts, etc., 185.
Huge world, 178.
Human Life, 186.
Hurrying fever, 194.
Hurst, 198.
Hurtling Polar lights, 164.
Hydaspes, 161.
Hyde Park, 191.
Hyphasis, 161.

Iacchus, 180.
Iberians, 202.
I came . . . passing wind, 162.
I know the Fyfield tree, 207.
Ilsley Downs, 204.
Incognisable, 186.
Indian Caucasus, 159.
In his light youth, 194.
Inly-written chart, 186.
Inviolable shade, 201.
Iran, 159.
Irk'd, 206.
Iron age, 196.
Iron coast, 173.
Iseult, 169.
Is Merlin prisoner, etc., 174.
Isolation, 186.
Is she not come? 168.
Ivy-cinctured, 179.

Jaxartes, 158.
Joppa, 164.
Joy, 194.
Just-pausing Genius, 200.

Kai Khosroo, 159.
Kaiser Dead, 187.
Kalmucks, 158.
Kara Kul, 157.
Keep, 206.

Ken, 195.
Kept uninfringed my nature's law, 186.
Khiva, 157.
Khorassan, 158.
Kindled, 161.
King Marc, 169.
Kipchak, 158.
Kirghizzes, 158.
Kohik, 163.
Kuzzaks, 158.

Lapithæ, 182.
Lasher pass, 199.
Launcelot's guest at Joyous Gard, 170.
Leads, 177.
Leaguer, 171.
Leper recollect, 164.
Light comer, 206.
Like that autumn star, 161.
Like that bold Cæsar, etc., 173.
Lines Written in Kensington Gardens, 178.
Lion's heart, 159.
Lions sleeping, 180.
Lips that rarely form them now, 191.
Lityerses, 208.
Loud Tyntagel's hill, 169.
Lovely orphan child, 170.
Luminous home, 163.
Lyoness, 169.

Mænad, 183.
Mail, 166.
Marcus Aurelius, 194.
Margaret, 165.
Matin-chime, 176.
Memorial Verses, 196.
Mendelssohn, 192.
Midland waters, 202.
Milk-barr'd onyx-stones, 181.
Miserere Domine, 192.
Moon, 187.
Moonstruck knight, 171.
Moorghab, 163.
Mountain-chalets, 176.
Movement, 193.
Mozart, 192.
Muses, 180.
My princess . . . good night, 171.

Needs must I lose them, etc., 206.
Never was that field lost or that foe saved, 160.
New bathed stars, 163.
Northern Sir, 163.
Nymphs, 180.

O'er . . . sea, 169.
Of age and looks, etc., 162.
Old-world Breton history, 173.
Once pass'd I blindfold here, 205.
One lesson, 193.
One slight helpless girl, 159.
On that day, 163.
Orgunje, 163.
Orpheus, 197.
Outlandish, 199.
Oxford towers, 198.
Oxus, 155.
O wanderer from a Grecian shore, 184.

Painter and musician too, 193.
Palladium, 189.
Palmers, 176.

Pamere, 156.
Pan's flute music, 180.
Passing weary, 175.
Pausanias, 191.
Pelion, 181.
Pen-bryn's bold bard, 187.
Peran-Wisa, 156.
Persepolis, 163.
Persian King, 157.
Perused, 160.
Petrarch, 192.
Philomela, 184.
Phœbus-guarded ground, 191.
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate, 206.
Pleasaunce-walks, 169.
Posting here and there, 173.
Potsdam, 188.
Prick'd upon this arm, etc., 162.
Prickers, 176.
Prie-dieu, 173.
Priest, 166.
Prince Alexander, 174.
Prore, 186.
Proserpine, 207.

Quiet Work, 193.

Range, 180.
Raphael, 192.
Rates, 195.
Recks not, 171.
Red-fruited yew tree, 200.
Reed, 205.
Remember all thy valour, 161.
Requiescat, 177.
Ride, 192.
Right for the polar star, 163.
Roman Emperor, 171.
Rotha, 197.
Rout, 180.
Rugby Chapel, 209.
Rustum! 161.

Sackcloth, 194.
Saint Brandan, 164.
Samarcand, 156.
Sanford, 207.
Sate, 159.
Savoy, 176.
Sconce, 172.
Scythian . . . embers, 181.
Seal'd, 166.
Secret in his breast, 171.
See what the day brings, 180.
Seistan, 156.
Self-Dependence, 190.
Self-murder, 164.
Seneschal, 173.
Shakespeare, 193.
Shakespeare, 193.
She knew each lily white which Enna yields, etc., 207.
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine, 207.
She loved the Dorian pipe, etc., 207.
Shepherd-pipe, 205.
Shore, 161.
Sibylla's name, 204.
Silenus, 183.
Silly, 206.
Simois, 189.
Skye, 188.
Snow-haired Zal, 159.
Soft sheep, 208.
Soft Sicily, 202.
Sohrab and Rustum, 149.
Sole, 162.

Son of Italy, 194.
Sophocles, 183.
So . . . So . . . , 206.
Soudan, 174.
South, 192.
Spitalfields, 195.
Sprent, 208.
Stagshorn, 173.
Stem, 186.
Stranger-knight, ill-starr'd, 170.
Strange unloved uproar, 178.
Style, 162.
Sunk, 156.
Sun sparkled, etc., 161.
Swains, 206.
Syrtes, 202.

Tagg'd, 199.
Tale, 160.
Tartar camp, 155.
Tasso, 192.
Teen, 200.
Tejend, 163.
That old king, 162.
That sweet city with her dreaming spires, 205.
Thebes, 181.
The Church of Brou, 176.
The Forsaken Merman, 165.
The Last Word, 188.
There, go! etc., 157.
The Scholar-Gipsy, 197.
Thessaly, 199.
The Strayed Reveller, 179.
Thine absent master, 191.
Thou had'st one aim, etc., 200.
Thou hast not lived, 200.
Thou possessest an immortal lot, etc., 200.
Thou wilt not fright me so, 160.
Thracian wild, 184.
Thyrsis, 203.
Tiresias, 181.
Titans, 196.
To a boon . . . country he has fled, 208.
Too clear web, etc., 185.
Toorkmuns, 158.
Tower'd, 160.
Transept, 176.
Tried, 160.
Tristram and Iseult, 167.
Troy, 182.
Tukas, 158.
Tunnies, 202.
Tyntagel, 169.

Ulysses, 180.
Unconscious hand, 162.
Unknown sea, 182.
Unnatural, 161.

Vacant, 192.
Vale, 204.
Vast, 160.
Vasty, 177.
Vaunt, 160.
Virgilian cry, 191.

Wanders, 169.
Wattled cotes, 198.
Weirs, 204.
Welcomed here, 170.
Western straits, 202.
West London, 195.
What . . . be? 168.
What boots it, 171.
What endless active life, 178.

What foul fiend rides thee? 171.
Whether that . . . or in some quarrel, 157.
Which much to have tried, etc., 200.
Wild white horses, 165.
Wimple, 174.
With a bitter smile, etc., 161.
With blossoms red and white, 206.
Wordsworth, 192.
Worldly Place, 194.
Wrack, 161.
Wychwood bowers, 199.
Wytham flats, 207.

Xanthus, 189.

Yellow Tiber, 177.
Yes, 187.
Youth's Agitations, 194.

Zal, 157.
Zirrah, 163.

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